PC Update

WHAT'S NEW!

ebruary 1998 Recommended price $3.95

REVIEWS

hree graphics packages from ixla
odeWarroir Professional 2
r Solomon's Anti-Virus 7
Microsoft FrontPage 98
nagIt/32 4.1
martDraw 3.1

FEATURES

700 days to Y2K. . .
Make the most of your Windows
Dual booting Win 95 and Win 3.x
A brief history of CDs from DA to DVD

Lotus 1996 NEWSLETTER AWARDS RUNNER UP BEST FEATURES & REVIEWS LARGE

Lotus 1996 NEWSLETTER AWARDS RUNNER UP BEST PUBLICATION LARGE

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Features

22 Dual booting Win 95 and Win 3.x

Ted Snell shows how to install Win 95, without losing your Win 3.x setup.

26 Make the most of your Windows

Win 95 tips and tricks from *Peter Stanski*.

28 Seeing the Basics: Did you know?

Tony Stevenson's series continues.

39 Peter's *PC Update* Puzzles

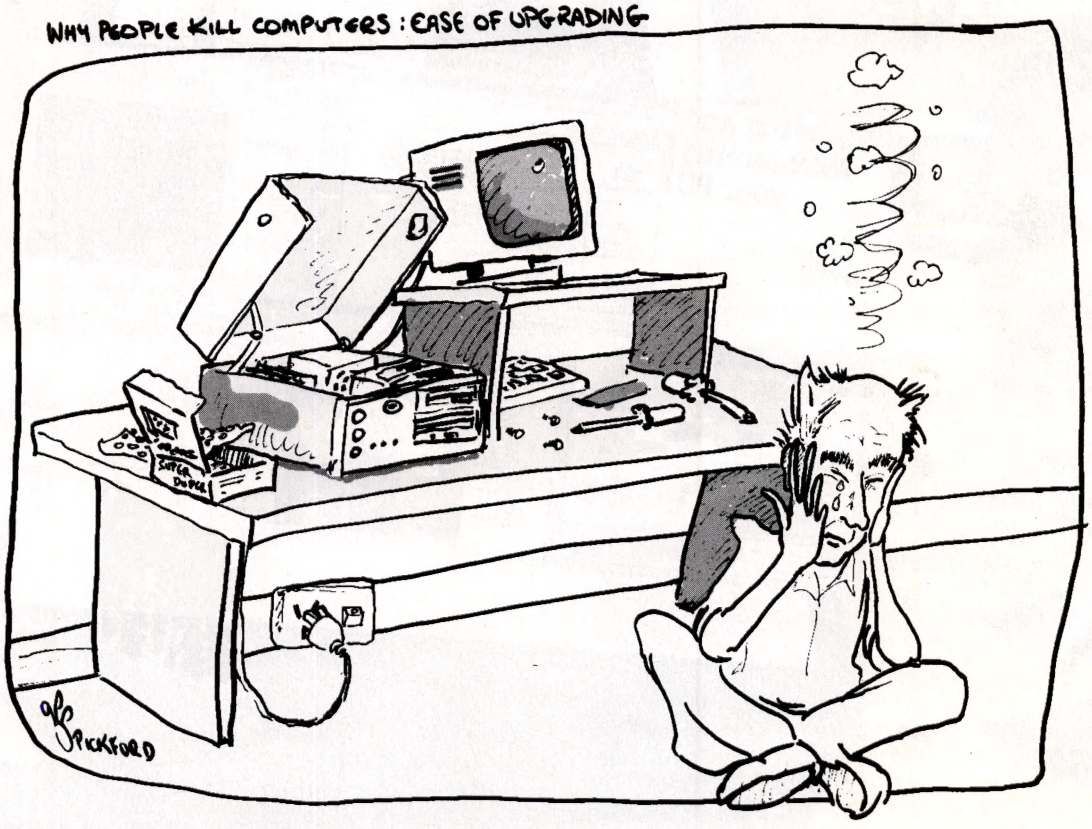
More brain-teasers from *Peter Smith*. While away a few minutes (or hours).

45 700 days to Y2K...

Tom Coleman says that the "Millenium Bug" is (mostly) under control, for PCs. Mainframes are another matter...

46 A brief history of CDs from DA to DVD

Peter Stanski looks at old and new CD-based storage systems.



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March	Internet & Connectivity	2 Feb	4 Feb	6 Feb	27 Feb
April	Controlling your Computer & Graphics, Imaging and Printing	2 Mar	4 Mar	6 Mar	27 Mar
May	Getting down to business (SOHO & Professional Practices)	6 Apr	8 Apr	10 Apr	1 May

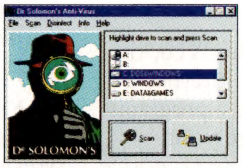
Reviews

6 SnagIt/32 4.1

Bernadette Houghton really likes this new screen grabber.

8 Dr Solomon's Anti-Virus 7

Bernadette Houghton's PC is "strappingly healthy", if it weren't she'd have more need of this product.



10 CodeWarrior Professional 2

Bob Burt reviews a tool for professional programmers.

14 Upgrading and Maintaining Your PC

This entertaining and well-designed set of instructions took *Bob Burt's* fancy.

52 Three graphics packages from ixla

Bernadette Houghton likes these—and there's a special deal for Melb PC members.

58 SmartDraw 3.1

Bernadette Houghton reviews a package that enables you to create standard drawings quickly.

60 Microsoft FrontPage 98

Ash Nallawalla creates, and solves, some HTML problems.

Club News

Mailer

Dial Help

4 Editorial *Carol Daniels*

13 Members' free ads

16 CPU—Club President's Update *Stan Johnstone*

18 *PC Update* Author's Submission form

19 Attention all *PC Update* authors *Carol Daniels*

20 APCUG Fall 1997 Conference (Part 1) *Carol Daniels*

30 What does membership of Melb PC offer you?

31 Membership and other forms

33 Internet access application form

35 Discounts for members

36 Special interest group meetings

37 SIG meeting reports

40 Shareware/Freeware library update *Glenn Webster*

49 Training courses

62 Random access *John Swale*

63 *PC Update* advertisers index

63 Monthly meeting details

63 Acknowledgments

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Graphics. Supply graphics or screen shots, wherever possible, as colour, or black and white images, saved in one of the formats: PCX, BMP, TIF, WMF or EPS.

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EDITORIAL

Carol Daniels

some of us are lucky ... we enjoy working with computers

Here I am, just a few weeks into 1998 and I've already broken several New Year's Resolutions, some of them mine.

What's New

What an obvious theme for February, since this is the time of year when Melb PC representatives are not long back from COMDEX, and their heads are still full to bursting with information about the latest and greatest in the world of computing. Of course we can't get everything into a single issue, so we'll be dribbling in new stuff every month as our indefatigable reviewers work their way through the new products on offer, and the articles we've planned to write take shape.

But I do want to use this issue's editorial to share some general impressions from 1997 Fall COMDEX.

In 1996, COMDEX was the epicentre of Internet Mania. In 1997, things were more down to earth. Many companies focused on productivity and did their best to dazzle journalists with demonstrations of how their application would make us all bigger, better, faster, stronger.

The Internet is still a high priority for most companies, but in the intervening 12 months they've come up with solid answers to the question: "Yeah, but what can I do with it?"

Despite the excitement of the Web, the primary business use of the Internet is for e-mail. So there were many programs that aim to help you manage your e-mail. For example, automate repetitive processes, mine queries and replies to build a knowledge base, integrate e-mail and telephony for customer service centres or link e-mail services with project management programs. There were even programs that turned e-mail into voice mail and voice mail into e-mail. My least favourites were those that emphasised e-mail's marketing potential and the ones designed to "tart up" e-mail with pictures, charts, animated characters, string quartets, brass bands, smells and a knock on the head if you aren't paying attention to the message.

I'm not an ultra purist

I like getting up-dated information on products and services I'm interested in, without having to go out looking for it. But only when I've expressed an interest. E-mail marketing programs that harvest e-mail addresses and send a customised letter to 16 million, "carefully selected individuals" are an abomination. Although I appreciate e-brochures, e-catalogues etc, and I recognise their place in marketing campaigns—that place is not my e-mail inbox, thank you very much.

On the Web side of things, there are still more people talking about selling on the Web than there are actually doing it or making money from it. Online commerce is still a hot topic, but the focus has switched from what you can do, to how you can do it. Databases and Java-based applications to deliver dynamic or customised information are gathering steam.

On the mechanics of COMDEX, I noticed strategic alliances between hardware and software vendors on the showroom floor. Some major software vendors didn't have a booth. Instead they supplied challenging demonstrations for appropriate hardware vendors to use to demonstrate the power/speed/reliability of their products. One of the most notable in this category was Adobe, which combined efforts with printer, scanner and memory makers (and probably more).

One sign that the computer industry is smack-dab in the middle of the mainstream these days is the growing number of gifts, gadgets and whatnots tied in with computers and computing.

Recognising the legion of computer users with chronic eyestrain, Bausch & Lomb have developed special Computer Eye Drops and a magnifying device that enables you to use a smaller screen font, get more text on the page, without squinting or leaning in and hitting your head on the screen. In the battle against RSI, there were gel-filled wristpads, and ultra-smooth gliding wrist pads to use with your mouse. Then there was the MouseTrapper, a wristpad and adapter that enables you to control your mouse without moving your hands from your keyboard. The wildest looking keyboards would have been at home in a science fiction movie, in fact they were used by Jody Foster in the movie *Contact*. Designed for people with limited mobility, the dual hand pads (one for each hand), don't really have any keys to speak of, and require the slightest flick of a fingertip in the right direction to activate.

I was also pleased to see a sizeable Australian presence under the *Austrade* banner. I'm going to write more about that in a future issue.

Just for fun

Some of us are lucky. We enjoy our work (including working with computers). Even when we're working we can still have fun. But that's not what I was thinking of in terms of this month's theme. I was thinking about regular fun, from playing computerised versions of classic board or card games, to the latest video games. Not just games either. We use our computers to add to the enjoyment of our hobbies, from genealogy and history to photography, music, needle craft, puzzles, drawing, writing, cartooning, even joke collecting. I think it would be fun to have more articles about that sort of computing in *PC Update*. What do you think? □

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Bernadette Houghton

SnagIt/32 4.1

Info Box

SnagIt/32 4.1

Minimum system requirements

- Minimum system requirements
- Win 95/NT 3.51
- Mouse or other pointing device.

Availability / cost

You can download a fully functional, 605 KB, trial version from *http://www.dunson.com.au/SnagIt/Default.asp* otherwise contact the Australian distributor,
Dunson Pty Ltd
Ph: (03) 9706 8773
Fax: (03) 9706 8704

RRP: $65 for single-user licence, multi-user licences available.

SnagIt is a real little ripper! Over the years, I've used several different screen capture programs, but none have impressed me as much as SnagIt. Not only has it saved me lots of time and hassle, it has also enabled me to reclaim hard disk space occupied by a bulky image-editing program I used to process my screen shots.

SnagIt captures not only screen images, but also editable text and videos. It handles drop-down boxes and menu flyouts without a hiccup, and you can even vet your screen shots before you save them to disk.

How it works

Installation is very quick, very straightforward and very easy. The first time you run SnagIt (and thereafter, any time you choose), the Quick Start Capture Wizard walks you through a no-nonsense three-step process of setting up SnagIt. If you don't use the Wizard, priming SnagIt is still very simple (Figure 1). Just select the appropriate capture mode (screen image, text or video), then choose which part of the screen to capture. Your choices are:

- Screen, which captures your whole screen
- Window, which is any window or portion of a window (depending on the application)
- Active Window
- Region, a rectangular area you delineate with your mouse
- Fixed Region, a rectangular area you delineate by specifying screen co-ordinates
- Bitmap File
- Clipboard
- Full-screen DOS
- Menu, for capturing drop-down menus.

If you choose, SnagIt will capture the cursor, the entire contents of vertical scrolling windows and the contents of the clipboard each time you refresh it. It can stamp captures with the date and time, and depending on the capture mode you're using, will offer other options. For instance, you can capture screen images in colour, monochrome or greyscale. You can scale images, dither and invert colours and perform some other colour manipulation operations (Figure 2). If you're capturing editable text, you can control the space and column formatting, font and word wrap.

Once you've pressed the hotkey to invoke a capture, SnagIt sends it to your printer, a file (BMP, PCX, GIF, JPEG, TIF formats supported) or the Catalog. The Catalog is really just a folder that you've nominated to keep your captured

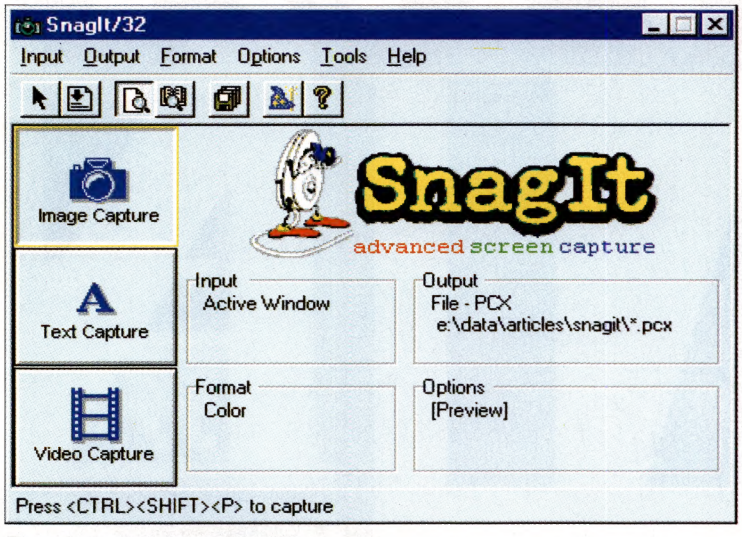

Figure 1. SnagIt's main screen

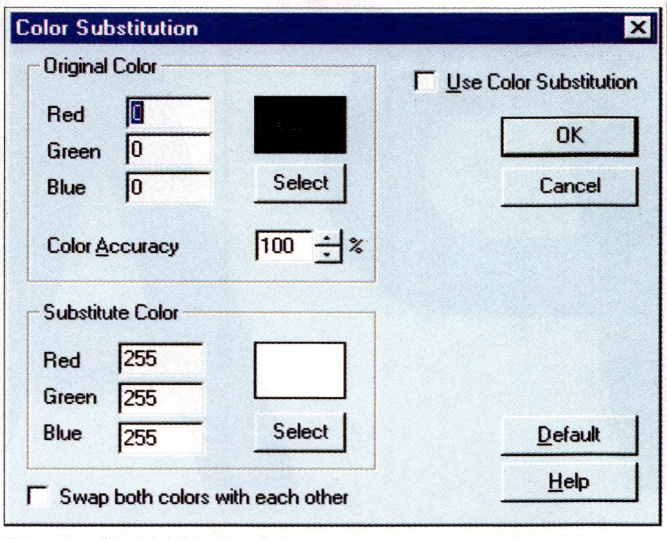

Figure 2. Color Substitution dialog

a real joy to use ... it has found itself a permanent niche on my computer

files. You can choose multiple outputs if you wish, and e-mail your captured files, providing you have a 32-bit MAPI e-mail client. One of my favourite features is the ability to preview files and crop them—I no longer need a separate program for this. Previewing is very fast; almost instantaneous in the case of screen images, and only a couple of seconds delay in the case of text and video. One of my greatest hassles with most screen capture programs is that I have to keep interrupting my thought processes to deal with the housekeeping of my captured files. SnagIt has an answer for this, with it's ability to name files automatically. Alternatively, if you choose, SnagIt will prompt you for a name each time, or simply overwrite the previous file.

The Catalog Browser displays thumbnails of all supported graphic files in the current folder, including text and video (Figure 3). Unfortunately, it doesn't support PCX files, so you can't display those. Most basic file operations are available, including Sort, Rename, Delete, Copy and Move. Double-clicking on a thumbnail presents the image at full size, and in this new window you can also crop images if necessary.

With Video Capture, SnagIt takes a series of screen shots at regular intervals, saving the results in an AVI file. You can view the file in the Catalog Browser, either as a video clip or frame-by-frame. If you choose, SnagIt will save individual frames as image files or print them.

Assessment

If you haven't already guessed, I'm mightily impressed with SnagIt. It's a real joy to use, and I suspect it has found itself a permanent niche on my computer. □

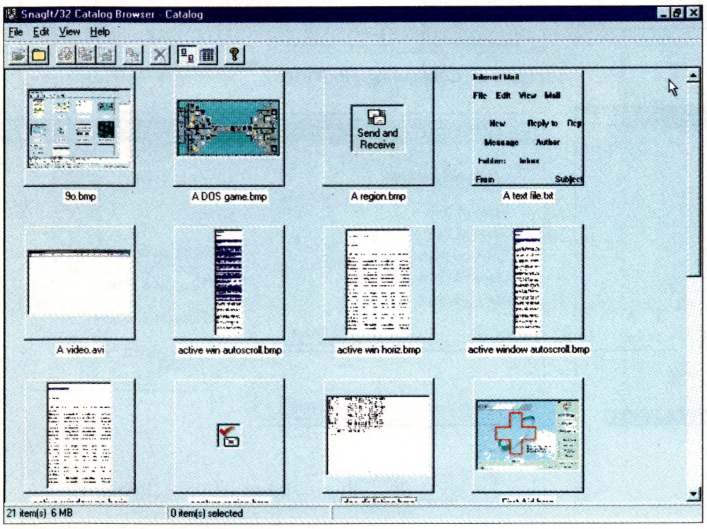

Figure 3. The Catalog Browser

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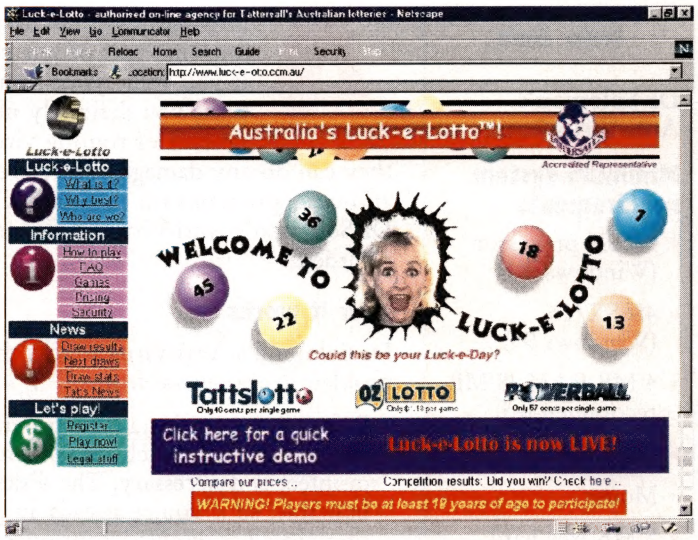

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Bernadette Houghton

Dr Solomon's Anti-Virus 7

Info Box

Dr Solomon's Anti-Virus 7

Minimum system requirements

- 386SX processor (Windows 3.1)
- 486SX/25 (Windows 95)
- 4 MB RAM (8 MB recommended)
- VGA display
- Mouse
- 5 MB free hard disk space.

Both Windows 3.1 and 95 versions are packaged in the same box.

Availability / cost

Street price around $200.
Available from most software resellers, otherwise contact Dr Solomon's Software
Ph: 1300 650 711
Fax: 1300 650 556.

Monthly virus updates are available by yearly subscription for $49.50 if you download them from the Internet or $139 if you prefer to have diskettes mailed to you.

You can also download a time-limited version from *http://www.drsolomon.com/download/findvirus.html*

Anti-virus programs are a boring but vital part of safe computing. If you value your data and your time, you definitely need a reliable means of routing viruses before they can do any damage. There are quite a few anti-virus programs on the market now, with Dr Solomon's Anti-Virus being very well regarded.

How it works

Dr Solomon's Anti-Virus attacks the virus problem from several fronts:

- Before you even install the program, there is an S.O.S. diskette to check your machine and disinfect it if necessary. The diskette is bootable, so if you're already in panic mode, or a virus has disabled your operating system, S.O.S. will come to the rescue. S.O.S.'s primary purpose is to check the boot and partition sector, but it also does a rudimentary file scan of your hard disk.
- VirusGuard loads into memory during bootup and keeps a beady eye out for viruses while you're in DOS mode. It warns you if it finds anything suspicious, and blocks access to the iffy files. VirusGuard doesn't actually clean out any viruses; it just tells you about them so you can manually invoke FindVirus to disinfect your machine.
- WinGuard keeps tabs on your computer while in Windows (including DOS sessions under Windows). In default mode it intercepts executables, macros and assorted program files as you access them. You can extend its reach by enabling various scanning options; *Scan on Writes*, for example, will scan files you've just downloaded or

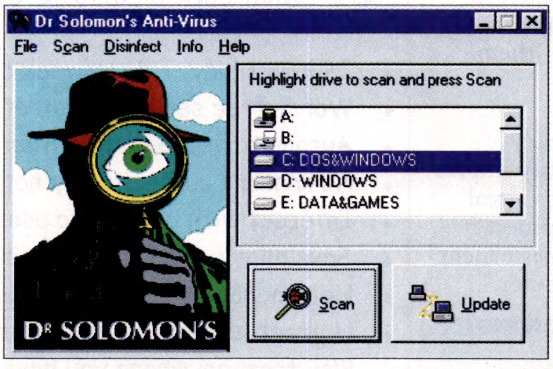


Figure 1. FindVirus' main screen

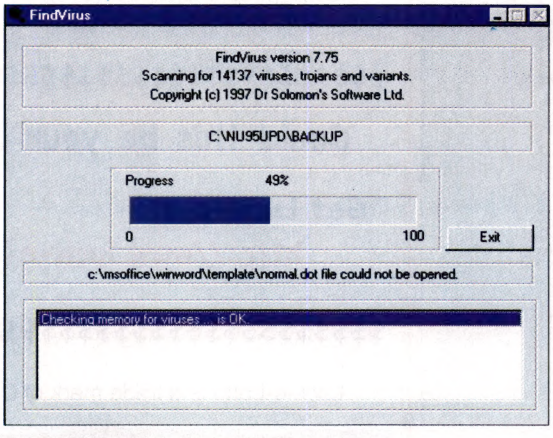


Figure 2. FindVirus in action

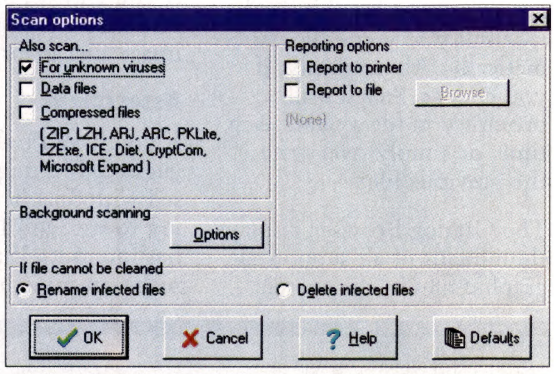


Figure 3. Configuring FindVirus

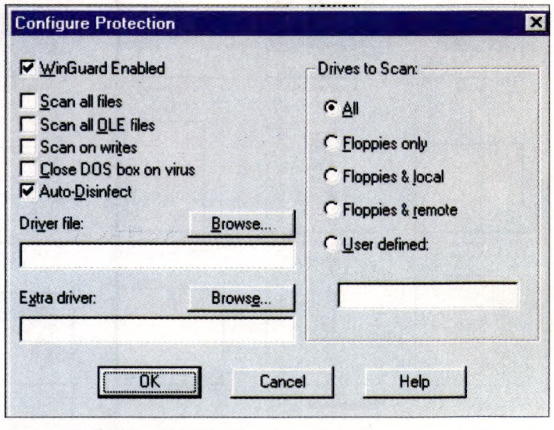
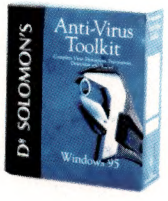


Figure 4. Configuring WinGuard

decompressed. WinGuard will automatically clean any infected files without your intervention, if you choose.

- FindVirus is a manual scanner which you invoke as needed. It can scan network connections and searches not only for a long list of known viruses—15129 at the time of writing—but can also monitor your system for unknown ones. Currently, FindVirus can locate viruses inside ten different types of compressed files. If you're in Explorer, you can also invoke it from the right-click menu for quick scanning of drives and directories.
- Regular viruses updates are available, with your first update being free of charge. After this, an Automatic Protection Plan provides monthly updates upon subscription. WinGuard reminds you each month to install an update.



Considered individually, each of Dr Solomon's defences has its strengths and weaknesses; for example, WinGuard can't scan for unknown viruses, and VirusGuard doesn't intercept as many viruses as WinGuard and FindVirus. When VirusGuard, WinGuard and FindVirus work in concert, however, they offer a high level of protection. You can choose the best mix of defences to suit your own computer setup and working habits; if you have no network or Internet connection, for instance, you may prefer just to invoke FindVirus as needed.

If you do encounter a virus and need more help than is contained within the program, Dr Solomon's Software offers free 24-hour emergency telephone support (Melbourne number).

Assessment

Dr Solomon's Anti-Virus starts protecting your computer as soon as you install it, but you'll probably need to customise it to suit your particular working habits. Mostly this is straightforward, but some users may find it a little confusing. For example, you configure FindVirus from two different places—the main program from the pull-down menu on the opening screen, and right-click scans from the Control Panel. Since both methods offer different options, this could puzzle some users. I also couldn't configure VirusGuard until I had visited Dr Solomon's Web pages (*http://www.drsolomon.com*) and discovered its command-line options. Mostly, however, the manual and help files offer clear and well-detailed assistance.

I encountered a couple of operational problems, not the least of which was difficulty getting in touch with Dr Solomon's Software for assistance—neither their documented Technical Support fax number nor e-mail address were working. Hopefully, they have since addressed these hitches in their communications.

Problems I encountered

- The S.O.S. diskette is a bootable 3.5-inch floppy, and my A: drive happens to be the old favourite, 5.25-inch. Because the S.O.S. files are too large to copy across to a 1.2 MB diskette, I had to open my machine and swap my floppy drive cables. Having done this, my problems continued. To cut a very long story short, it seems that if you use disk management software to access larger hard disks, you'll need to load the drivers onto the S.O.S. diskette. But then again, if you have an older BIOS like I do (circa 1993), it is possible that S.O.S. will still refuse to work. Let me hasten to add, however, that S.O.S. worked like a charm on two other machines I tried it on.
- I could neither register online, nor download my free virus update. Dr Solomon's Software are on top of this problem, though, and have alternative arrangements for such cases. They'll either mail you the update or offer you a Web address from which you can download it manually.

Apart from these problems, Dr Solomon's Anti-Virus appeared to work well. Luckily for me, but unfortunately for the sake of this review, my system is strappingly healthy—not a blue glimmer of a virus in sight. So while I can't specifically claim that Dr Solomon's Anti-Virus actually does find and rout viruses, I can say that it is a fairly straightforward, yet comprehensive virus-scanning program, with a very good reputation. Its simple interface belies its power, and its multi-pronged defences monitor your computer unobtrusively, and with little apparent effect on performance. □

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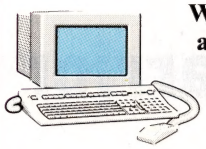

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Bob Burt

CodeWarrior Professional 2

...well worthy of serious consideration by professional programmers

Info Box

Codewarrior Professional 1

Minimum system requirements

- Win 95/NT 4.0
- 486 or Pentium
- 16 MB RAM
- 80 MB free hard disk space
- CD-ROM drive

Availability / cost

The Australian distributor is
Techflow Pty Ltd
5/17 Mooramba Rd
Dee Why NSW 2099
Ph: 1800 500 650
Fax: (02) 9982 3623
E-mail:
balu@techflow.com.au

Price (Rel 1): $880

Competitive Upgrade price: $625

Academic price: $180

All purchases of CodeWarrior Professional Release 1 receive a mailing of Release 2 upon registering via the Internet, and free technical support for 12 months from Metrowerks.

You may download a trial version from the Metrowerks Web site at *www.metrowerks.com*

The CodeWarrior series of products are probably new to most readers of *PC Update*. Developed by Metrowerks, they are of particular interest to professional programmers, since they provide an *Integrated Development Environment* (IDE) for software development across a range of platforms, including Windows 95, Windows NT, Mac OS and others. Support is also given for many common languages, such as C, C++, Java and Object Pascal.

Although the IDE eases the burden of changing to a different platform, this review will be deliberately biased toward its use under Windows 95 and, to accommodate my programming limitations, will assume Pascal to be the language of choice. Fortunately for me, the Pascal provided is virtually identical to the Turbo Pascal with which I am already familiar.

The early days

I had two difficulties while preparing myself to undertake this particular review. First, the amount of printed documentation which comes with CodeWarrior is limited to one *QuickStart* manual of 40 pages, which is sparse indeed, bearing in mind the complexities of modern-day programming. Fortunately, the software is supported by a huge volume of online material, claimed to be over 10,000 pages. I felt it necessary to print out and study at least a proportion of the key documentation before I became comfortable with the reviewing task.

The second difficulty arose after I had installed the software ready for familiarisation and review. I had already registered the product with Metrowerks on the Internet. Almost exactly two weeks after doing so, an airmail package arrived from Austin, Texas with Release 2 of the software provided on three CD-ROM discs. So, do I review Release 1 or Release 2 or both? As I found that there were some major improvements in Release 2, I decided to remove Release 1 from my hard disk (all 300 MB of it) and install Release 2. Herein lay the first improvement—only 161 MB needed, although part of the pruning was due to the IDE being set up without its Help files.

The package

Release 1 of CodeWarrior Professional is a new edition of CodeWarrior which combines the previously self-standing Mac-hosted and Windows-hosted versions. Three CD-ROMs provide, in addition to the IDE:

- Windows 95/NT Tools and Reference
- Mac OS Reference
- Mac OS Tools

Release 2 is contained on three CD-ROMs also, but with the material distributed rather differently. The essential change for Windows 95-based installation is that a second disc contains the Windows-related reference material. Even more online documentation is included with this upgrade than for Release 1.

The documentation

The material is made available in a number of formats. For Windows use, it is variously available in the standard WinHelp (HLP), Acrobat (PDF) and HTML formats. To accommodate HTML browsing, a copy of Internet Explorer is provided.

The core documentation is the *IDE User Guide*, the *Debugger User Guide* and four Acrobat-based tutorials in interactive slide-show format to familiarise you with the IDE and its major components.

Then there are Language and Compiler manuals. For example, for my Pascal needs there is a *Compilers Reference*, an *Error Reference* a *Pascal Language Reference* and a *Pascal Library Reference*, all in PDF format.

Targeting manuals tell you what you should know about developing code for your selected platform. For our needs, therefore, there is a *Targeting Win32* manual for the Win32 platform. This shows the use of the supplied Win32/x86 compiler, linker, resource compiler and debugger to prepare a variety of Win32-based projects, including applications, static libraries and shared libraries (DLLs). A copy of the *Win32 SDK Reference* from Microsoft is also included.

If you are not happy with the online access to the information, both language and targeting manuals can be purchased separately as books. Unfortunately the online format for the major books does not permit printing out from the Acrobat reader.

The Metrowerks Web site includes, among other things, some additional books such as *Programming Practice: Pascal* (486 pages) and *Principles of Programming* (526 pages). These are also in Acrobat format and in these cases permit printout.

Running the IDE

When you launch CodeWarrior, you initially see a 6-menu bar at the top of the window with a 21-icon global toolbar immediately below it. The remainder of the screen is unused until such time as you create a project, manage its files, build your project, create your code, compile, link and debug it and so on. So if you are new to programming, you will have a steep learning curve. However, if you have programming experience, it is more simply a matter of becoming familiar with the development tools which you will use to create your projects.

The Project Manager and Editor

These are two of the major development tools which you use from within the IDE. The Project Manager holds all the files that you need for each specific project, which you gather together into an .MCP file which you name to identify individual projects. Some basic project files are available which contain start-off files for the particular language you will be using.

All files are managed from within the Project Manager. You will, of course, be spending most of your time preparing your source code, for which you use the Editor, but you would normally save each file within the Project Manager so that it can be compiled and linked, although such files can be added later if necessary. You set the link order from within the Manager and you can compile just a selected file from a project if so required. You can also force a file to be compiled the next time you build a project (you *touch* the file) and you can also *untouch* the file to avoid its compilation.

You can have multiple projects open at the same time and create multiple builds of the same project.

The Editor uses syntax colouring and styling and has code-navigation shortcuts.

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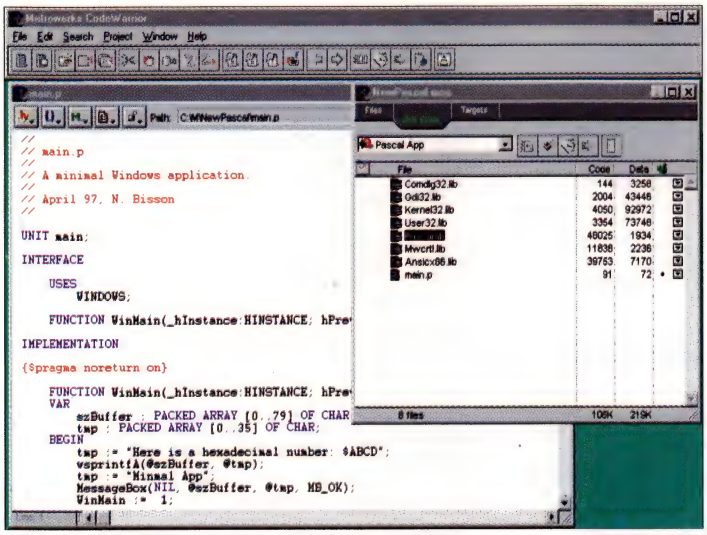

Figure 1. CodeWarrior IDE showing Editing Window and Project Window

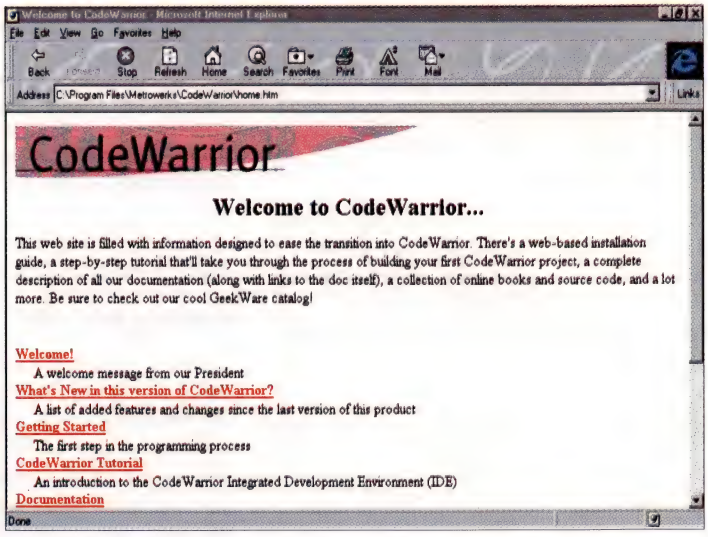

Figure 2. Pseudo Web site using MS Internet Explorer with a resident HTML file

The Debugger

Another major component of the IDE, the debugger allows you to watch source code execute on a line by line basis and view or edit variables to track down any problems with the project. It can actually be operated independently of the IDE, in which case you would open a symbolics file (.SYM) to debug the project associated with it. From within the IDE, you simply *enable* the debugger to launch it and open the Program and Browser windows.

You control the debugging by using commands on the toolbar (also available on the Control menu). Naturally, you can step through your program, set break-points and view the values of registers and variables. The debugger works in any of the supported languages.

Technical support

Registration of CodeWarrior entitles the user to 12 months free technical support. I am able to vouch for the effectiveness of this support (in my case, at least). It so happened that when I was checking on the *Guided Tours* available with Release 2 I found that the Project Manager sample (.MCP file) which is used for all four Tours generated an *Unknown Error* message and would not load either directly from its CD-ROM, or from a copy created on the hard disk. So the Tours could not be completed. I reported this to Metrowerks by e-mail and received an acknowledgment and reference number within 24 hours. After a further 24 hours I received a detailed reply, suggesting the project file may not have been properly updated. A replacement was created by Metrowerks and supplied as a ZIP file. This worked fine and all the Tours then ran smoothly. Problem solved in quick time.

Conclusion

Once I had completed the formidable task of studying a sufficiently large sample of the documentation to properly grasp how to create and complete a project using the IDE, I found the interface fairly simple to use. In my case, I would need yet more time to fully appreciate the MFC libraries for building Windows 95 applications, for example, but the tasks of creating simpler projects from my Pascal code were completed gracefully. The IDE is speedily responsive and you have all the tools you need at your fingertips. For the busy full-time programmer the support for multiple open projects, multiple targets per project, sub-projects and threaded execution will be a boon.

CodeWarrior Professional is well worthy of serious consideration by professional programmers. □

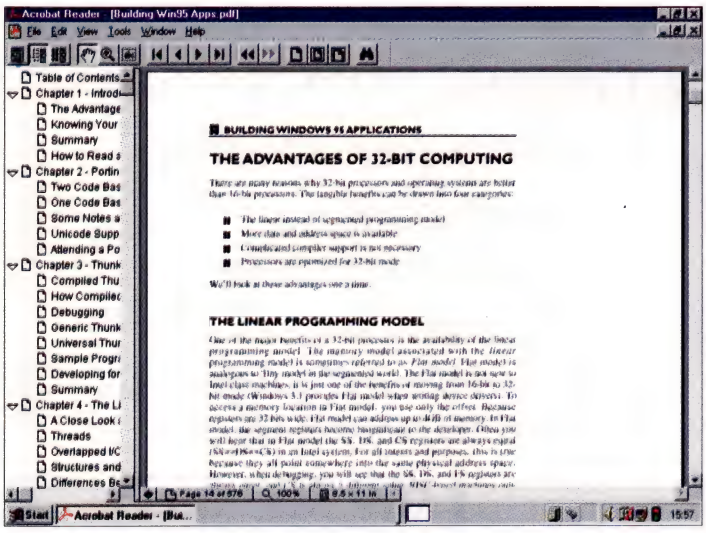

Figure 3. Acrobat-generated text from a book "Building Windows 95 Applications"

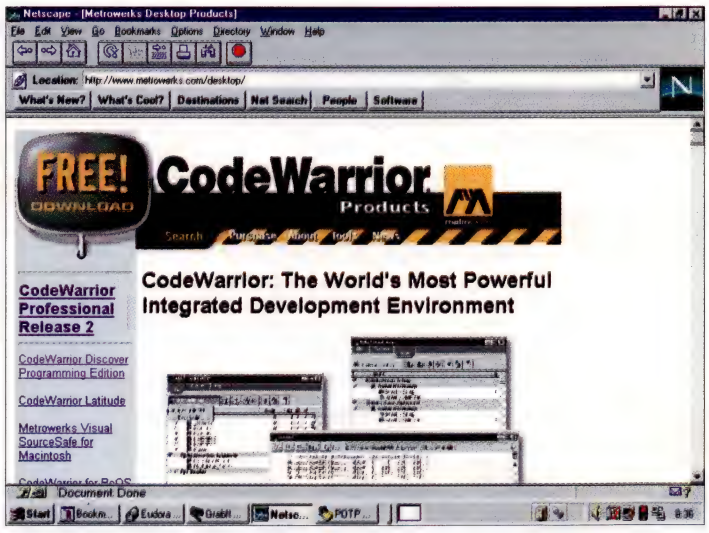

Figure 4. Metrowerks' true Web site

Members' free ads

FREE

The following items are available free to a good home.

IBM Displaywrite 4 Ver 2 word processor package (3.5-inch diskettes)

Lotus 1-2-3 Release 2.2 for DOS (5.25-inch diskettes)

dClip jr. V1.5 programming aid (5.25-inch diskette)

1 box XIDEX 5.25-inch HD blank diskettes (unopened)

1 box VERBATIM 5.25-inch HD blank diskettes (unopened)

Turbo Pascal 6 Programming for the PC—book and 5.25-inch diskette

Borland Turbo C V1.5 manuals

Box containing hundreds of 5.25-inch diskettes—most contain assorted programs

Herbie Walter (03) 9384 1219 or 019 432 247

WANTED

200 MHz pentium CPU, not MMX.

Power supply for HP600 deskjet.

Brett: (03) 9481 6747 or brett@melbpc.org.au

FOR SALE

Kawasaki GPX250R, Ninja 250R (1986—1988) motorcycle service manual and supplement. $15

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Pentium 133, 1.7 GB hard drive, 32 MB EDO RAM, 14-inch SVGA, 3.25-inch floppy, 20-speed CD-ROM, sound card, amplified speakers, Win 95, Encarta 96, Works 97, keyboard and mouse. All as new. $1400

John: (03) 9793 1447

P90 miditower with 32 MB RAM, 2 GB HD, Opti16 sound, S3 PCI Virge, 24x CD no screen, spkrs or k/b. $700

EQ333 dot matrix (LQ2500 emul). $50

John: (03) 9887 0621

Fax-Modem by Jetstream (Maestro), 28,800 bps, external, as new, Aussie made & Austel standard, for Data & Class 1 Faxes, complete with manual, cables, plus FaxWorks & COMIT dialler for either Windows 3 or 95, also free DOS phone dialler. $75

Pilot 1000, palm size Personal Organiser (Appointments, Addresses, ToDo List, Memos, World Times) with 1 MB memory, cradle and cable for hot synchronised backups to your PC, plus two styluses, pocket carrying case, manuals, and original diskettes. In perfect condition. $200

Rus: (03) 9525 8256

NEC Multisync Monitor (SVGA). $100

Claris Works 3.0 and FaxWorks 3.0. $30

WordPerfect DOS 6.0b. $100

Noel Craske: (03) 9523 9245

Microsoft Windows 95 on 3.5-inch diskettes. $20

Microsoft Plus! pack on 3.5-inch diskettes. $15

Microsoft Flight Simulator v5.0 for DOS. $20

Novell PerfectOffice V3 for Win 3.x/95. Includes Wordperfect 6.1, Quattro Pro 6.0, Presentations 3.0, InfoCentral 1.1, Envoy 1.0 and Groupwise v4.1. $45

Star Trek The Next Generation Interactive Technical Manual CD. $15

Brief Programmer's Editor for DOS. $10

Wordperfect V5 for DOS manual and workbook. $5

Biztel 2400 external modem including all cables, perfect working order. $10

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SuperPrint 5.0 (versions for Win3.1/95/NT). $75

HyperAccess 8.0 (versions for Win3.1/95/NT). $50

Info Select 3.0 (16-bit for Win3.1/95). $35

All three for $120

Enquiries and offers to Jack (03) 9818 8645 (AH) or e-mail: jgcrawf@ibm.net

Sound Blaster 16. $60

VL/BUS 1 MB VGA accelerator. $60

486 DX2-66 motherboard and CPU. $200

All manuals and drivers avaliable.

Caroline: (03) 9789 9680, morrcjt@melbpc.org.au

Advertisements from mem-bers, for Swap, Wanted, For Sale, Free, etc, are run free of charge.

All ads must be loaded as a file (NB: not a message) to the BBS (NB: not the Internet) in ASCII format to area PCUP or supplied as an ASCII file on a virus-free non-returnable MS-DOS diskette (any size) and **delivered to the Group's Office**.

We do not have the time to type your ads, so this service is restricted to electronic advertisements.

Infected disks are thrown out, without attempting to disinfect or recover data!

Members' ads will be included in the first available issue of PC Update.

Advertisements must include at least one phone number—if you only want replies via the BBS or Internet, only advertise there.

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I create a custom form for your event at my Web site; you get RSVPs listed on a Web page or as email.

EasyRSVP

http://easyrsvp.com

A contact form, working demos, and details available at the above URL.

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This is how it works:
Find a friend.
Get a Melb PC membership form.
Get friend to fill out form, showing your membership number as the referring member.
Send form with payment.
Your membership is extended by one month for every new individual member you introduce, up to a maximum of 12 months.

Bob Burt

Upgrading and Maintaining your PC

Info Box

Upgrading and Maintaining your PC

Minimum system requirements

- IBM PC or compatible
- Windows 3.1+/95
- Double-speed CD-ROM
- 486DX
- 1 MB hard disk space
- 8 MB RAM
- VGA graphics
- 8-bit sound card

Availability / cost

Picturebox Multimedia Pty Ltd
PO Box 211
Geelong Vic 3220
Ph: (03) 5222 6787
Fax: (03) 5221 6313
E-mail: *pb@picturebox.com.au*
Web: *http://www.picturebox.com.au*
Purchase price via the Web
$49.00 plus $3.95 postage

This product heralds a new venture for its originator, *Picturebox Multimedia*, in that the company has, until now, been creating multimedia products in the corporate area, including advertising agencies and even Workcover. Distributed in Australia by Dataworks, *Upgrading and Maintaining your PC* (UMPC) is the first title directly available for the public at large.

Coming on a single CD-ROM, UMPC assumes that the purchaser owns an IBM-type computer and knows in general how to use it, has kept clear of attempting to upgrade it but is willing to give it a go with the guidance provided on this disc.

The content

There are not too many surprises in the listed topics:

- Introduction
- Cleaning and Maintenance
- Optimising your System
- Upgrades
- Networking
- Techy stuff made easy
- Hacker Snacks

The *introduction*, as you would expect, leads you gently into the subject matter that is on offer, showing you how to use the CD-ROM, providing a quick tour and telling you about the pop quiz that is provided so you can gauge your level of understanding as you progress. It also sets the pattern for the style of instruction provided. It is deliberately fairly light-hearted and uses easily understood words and phrases throughout, although if you are not well up on the technicalities you will certainly have to dart out to the *Techy stuff* section for explanations of the essential jargon. Be assured that due emphasis is given to the need for great care in handling electrical equipment. The major instructional tool is the provision of more than an hour of video, with a cheerful operator showing you the details of the appropriate upgrade or maintenance procedure being described. This is suitably backed up by a display of its text whenever you call for it. You can print out the material and assemble a series of fact sheets if so required.

The *Cleaning and Maintenance* section deals with floppy drives, the keyboard, the mouse

Figure 1. Opening screen

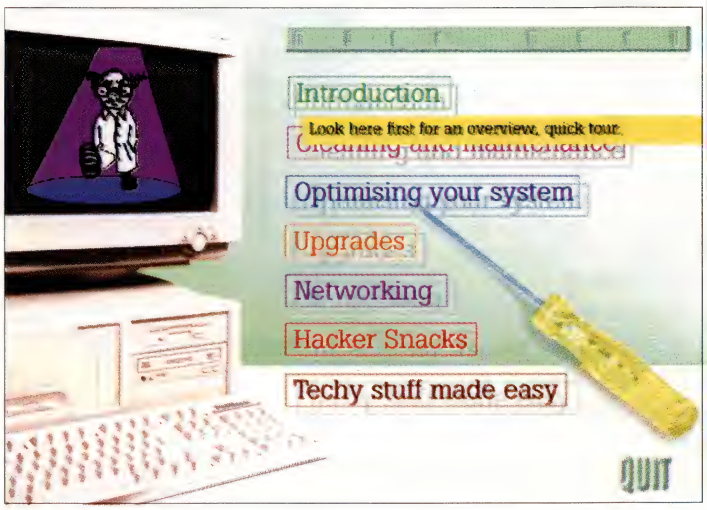


Figure 2. Main menu

and the screen. Replacement of a processor fan is also included here. *Optimising your System* shows you how to optimise your hard disk and also deals with video settings, while *Upgrades* covers modems, hard disks, sound cards and extra memory.

The *Networking* section provides an explanation of networking and shows you how to fit a network card and set it up. The *Techy stuff* includes explanations of concepts such as buses, IRQ, DMA and NPN. All dealt with quite competently, except for one minor fault—misuse of the apostrophe.

For example, instead of *buses*, the incorrect term *bus's* is used to denote the plural of *bus*. Likewise we see other strange plurals, such as IRQ's, DMA's, COM's and even a singular P'N'P'. I (rather begrudgingly!) have to accept *Plug'n'Play* though.

The last section, *Hacker Snacks* is sub-titled *Fast Fuel for Hardworking Hackers* As the CD-ROM leaflet suggests that you use it to "cook your very own junk food and eat like a pig!", please don't take this section too seriously.

Conclusion

This is an entertaining and well-designed set of general instructions for the maintenance and upgrading of your PC. The sound is clean and bright and the video definition just sufficient for the display of detail necessary to illustrate each procedure. □

...entertaining and well-designed set of general instructions

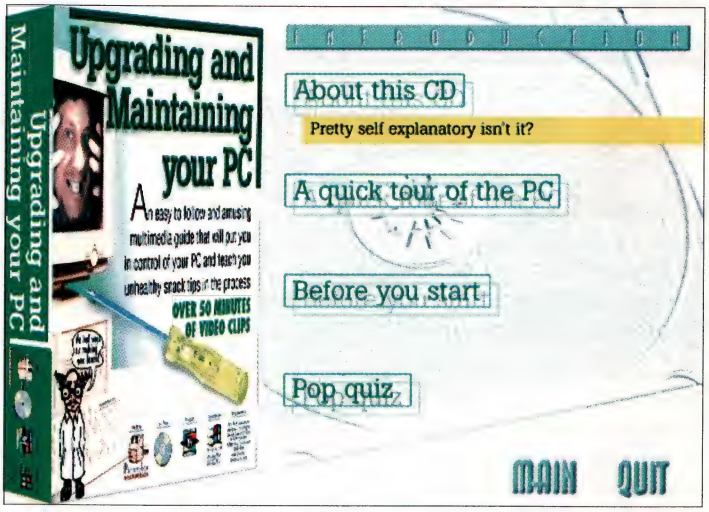


Figure 3. Introduction

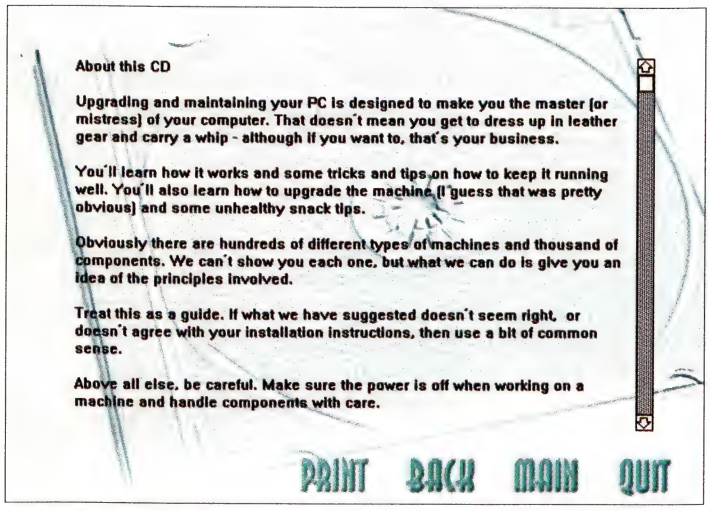


Figure 4. Displaying text

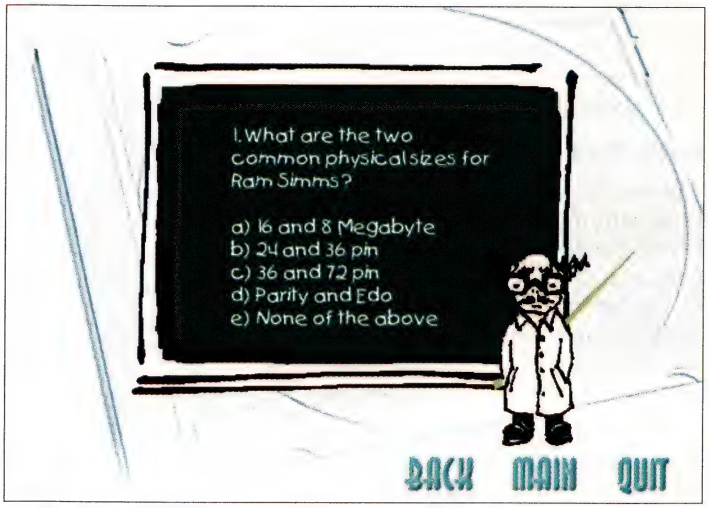


Figure 5. Part of the test

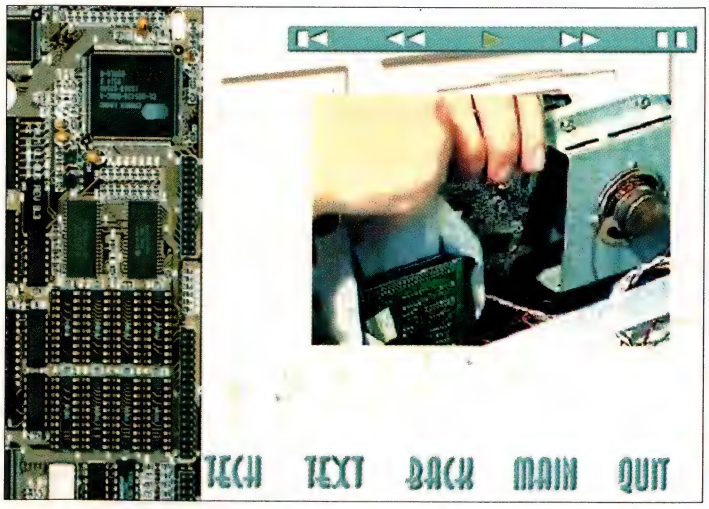


Figure 6. Changing a component

Figure 7. Hacker snacks

Stan Johnstone

CPU (Club President's Update)

A Happy New Year to all members, and I hope 1998 will be an exciting year for you. During 1997 we all got a bit tied up with the business of moving to our new premises in Dorcas Street, so now we can concentrate on all those other things we may have let slip a little during that period.

There are a few odds and ends still to be tidied up, mainly due to delays resulting from Telstra lines and links. Some of these affect our PABX and remote control to doorways and, in turn, the security system. Because of our heavy reliance on Telstra for our Internet, BBS and office connections, the very first action on our program was to make contact with them, as far back as April 1997.

Committee

The elections held in December were a disappointment, leaving us with insufficient candidates to fill all the vacant positions. Not that we wanted a repeat of the faction fighting that plagued Melb PC in previous years, however we were keen to attract new and enthusiastic members for the Committee.

At the same time, I would like to think that you are satisfied with the performance of last year's Committee. However I am very pleased to be able to report that the positions declared vacant have now all been filled, and the Committee is again at full strength.

The three new members who have joined the Committee include one of the founding members—**John Swale** (well known for his Random Access page); honorary life member **George Skarbek** (who is well known to all, for his answers to everyone's problems); and **Brian Horman**. Brian may not be well known to many members, but he has been a member for almost six years, and has been using computers of all types, for various purposes, in businesses for many years.

With the wealth of experience these new Members bring, and the Committee as it stood after the AGM, Melb PC probably now enjoys the strongest, most experienced and united Committee in its entire history. The Committee Members have a combined total of 110 years of Melb PC membership, and they have been continuous members of Melb PC through the "good" and "bad" years.

Now they all ready to get on with the job for 1998.

Modems

In the race by manufacturers to capture the 56 kbps market, it is unfortunate that there are two "standards" currently available— the K56flex (by Rockwell) and X2 (by US Robotics). During the first half of 1998 a new international standard will be handed down, which may differ again from both of these.

In addition, modem manufacturers are still learning all the ins and outs of this new and faster technology. In my own case, there have been two firmware flash upgrades to the particular 56 kbps modem I have been using since it was purchased in October 1997. In my own experience, the first upgrade permitted connect speeds in excess of 33.6 kbps, and the second upgrade increased its stability quite remarkably. Because of these changes in a relatively short time, I continue to check to see if yet another upgrade has appeared. If you do download an upgrade from a manufacturer's Web site, please ensure it is the Australian version you use, as there are significant differences between countries.

We advised members back in July 1997 that we would initially be adopting the K56flex standard in line with most ISPs in Australia. Currently only a few of the larger ISPs are able to support both protocols, and a few others have adopted the X2 standard. Due to financial constraints Melb PC was certainly not able to support both systems, which would require separate ISDN lines and equipment. However, as soon as the international standard is released later this year, Melb PC will then adopt it and upgrade our equipment accordingly.

Currently X2-type modems will connect to Melb PC equipment, but their transfer rate is never likely to exceed 33.6 kbps.

With the large number of 56 kbps modems currently on the market, one of our main concerns is that members do not get stuck with a modem that is not capable of later being flash upgraded when the international standard is struck. Be very careful as there are many modems on the market at present that are not capable of being upgraded.

If you are in the market for a modem, it would be unwise not to go for the fastest available—ie 56 kbps. For maximum transfer rates to Melb PC equipment, select only those using the Rockwell K56flex technology. But most importantly, obtain a guarantee from the retailer that the modem you buy is flash upgradable to the new international standard when it is released.

Internet

Unfortunately, at this stage I am unable to give you details of additional and changed features that should be available before the next issue of *PC Update*.

It is probable that these features will mean we will need more lines—just at a time when we thought we had the perfect balance!

By the way, users of the Dataplex analogue modems will have seen that these have all been upgraded from their previous 28.8 kbps capacity to 33.6 kbps—every little bit helps.

SIG leaders meeting

Joe Henry, the Committee's SIG Co-ordinator held a meeting of all SIG leaders on Sunday 11 January 1998 to discuss plans and activites for the year. Unfortunately, due to the lead time in writing this page, I am unable to tell you what they have in mind for us this year.

There is always room for a new SIG (Special Interest Group) and Joe is the man to speak to about these issues. For those with e-mail access, the easiest way is to contact him is by e-mail to *joehenry@melbpc.org.au*

Magazine delivery

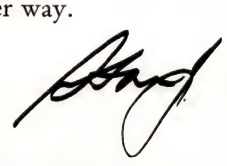
In addition to the printing of *PC Update*, the distribution and delivery contract has been awarded to Wilke Color, using Australia Post.

This is the 53rd issue of *PC Update* printed by Wilke Color, and if their co-operation, expertise and quality they have given us over the past years is anything to judge the company by, I am sure we will all benefit from a more prompt and improved delivery.

Next month

By next month we should have everything settled down and back to normal. We will re-start the orientation days, the seminar training nights, and anything else we can think of and get under way.

Until next month,



Volunteers of the month

January—Richard Solly

Richard was one of our original Internet team when it first started nearly four years ago, and saw it expand up to about 380 users.

When it became obvious that we were going to become really serious about the whole thing, he helped formulate the policy and direction for the beginning of the current system. Although most of the original equipment has now been superseded, it has been Richard who has guided us in our choice of both hardware and software including periods of rather drastic re-organisation.

Readers of his messages will note that quirky humour with his own twist to a well known phrase, and his explanatory articles in *PC Update* are always likely to open new areas for experimentation.

Previously VOM for October 1996, the recognition of Richard's efforts this second time is well overdue.

February—Ken Thomas

One of the most popular Melb PC SIGs is the one for Retired & Interested Persons, which has been meeting on the fourth Friday of each month at Glen Waverley for almost ten years.

Ken Thomas was originally talked into taking over the group for a few months while Keith Bower, who started the group, was overseas. However on his return he suggested that as Ken was doing such a good job he might as well continue. All that was eight years ago, and Ken continued to lead the group for the next six years.

In December 1996, Ken again took up the reins and each month he hosts an average of 120 members at its meeting. Its own magazine "Ripper News" is full of tips and comments and is a wonderful source of information. Before and after each meeting a number of mini-SIGs meet to enable members with similar interests to share their knowledge and experience.

Ken Thomas always makes new members welcome, and creates a wonderful venue for those who are just starting out, through to those who can handle all the details of desktop publishing.

A very important aspect of Melb PC is convened by our VOM—Ken Thomas. □

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Attention all *PC Update* authors

Present and future authors

We now require a signed submission from every author. A copy of the form is printed on the facing page. It is also included in the style guide, which is available for downloading from the BBS.

You may submit a form for a single article, in which case a new permission is required for each submission, or you can provide us with a blanket release, covering all submissions to *PC Update* until you advise us of the change in writing.

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Past authors

You may have noticed that *PC Update Online* has been undergoing renovations for some time. This is, in part, due to our change in policy and our decision to request a signed release form, from former authors, before re-activating this portion of our web site.

If you want to give Melb PC permission to reprint your articles on the web, please call the office and request Release Form (II) be sent to you. Sign it and return it to the office.

If you have already signed and returned the form posted to you by the office, you do not need to sign another one. However, if I do not receive a signed form by 1 March, I will assume that you have declined us permission to reprint your articles on the web.

I have tried to identify all former authors, and the office has done its utmost to locate those that are no longer Melb PC members. If you know of such an author, who would like his or her work re-printed on the web, but has not received a letter from me requesting a signed release, please ask him or her to call the office and request Release Form (II)

Note: Active authors, who have already signed a blanket submission form, do not need to sign a new one. They should, if they wish their previously published material to appear on the web, sign Release (II) form, permitting us to re-publish on the web.

Contact the office

Ph: (03) 9699 6222 Fax: (03) 9699 6499
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BBS: Send a message to Tricia Swan or Margaret Greer in the message area "Melb PC Admin-Discussion & Suggestions". □

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Reference Letter
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Carol Daniels

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Saturday, let the Roundtables begin

Although I'm writing this some time after the last roundtable ended, my mind is still buzzing from the many ideas, projects and activities being used to promote and develop user groups around the world.

Each year brings increasing participation from Region 8 Groups (those outside the USA). As usual the Canadian contingent was strong, but Fall 1997 also saw representatives from Japan, the CIS, and Australia, from Melb PC and Brisbug. As one of two Board of User Group Advisors (BoDA) representing Region 8, I'd like to see that grow to include representatives from every user group in Region 8.

But back to 1997, and the innovative roundtables organised by Rich Schinnell, a member of APCUG's 1997 Board of Directors and First Vice President of the Capital PC User Group (CPCUG), in Rockville, Maryland USA. I made a bee-line for roundtables focused on user group communication, magazines, web publishing, marketing and public relations. Stan headed straight for anything to do with organisational management, presidential matters, and community service. For Ash it was roundtables for web masters, and those on member databases, member surveys, and organisational growth.

Editors unite

At the traditional "Meet and Greet Other Editors" session we discussed various approaches to newsletters, not just different production methods, but different philosophies about the function newsletters serve in user group communities. Although in 1996 many editors said they were considering a switch to electronic-only distribution for their newsletters, there were only a handful that had taken or were considering this route in 1997. The consensus seemed to be, as APCUG Reports Editor Sam Gardner wrote, "Newsletters are the glue that holds the user group together. Printed newsletters have many unique benefits that in almost every case outweigh the cost of production." Maybe that's why the sessions on making and managing a user group's money were so well attended. Having Intuit's irrepressible Richard Katz as one of the presenters for the Financial Management Roundtable could have something to do with the standing room only audience.

A new spin on tried and true techniques

Alas, I skipped Richard's performance to attend "Publicity, good and bad", led by Judy Taylor (Santa Clarita PC Group) and Lee Schwab (Napa Valley PC User's Group). Although it wasn't SRO, the room was full to the gills. Why? A quick show of hands proved that Melb PC isn't the only user group that faces the frustration of hearing "I didn't know there was computer group in (insert your home town)." It seems that the more common computers get, the harder it is for user groups to get publicity.

The roundtable started with a short rundown on the theory and practice of public relations. The conveners also reminded us that as not-for-profit organisations, we are often entitled to have public service announcements played on radio and television, at little or no cost. This is a powerful public relations resource that few groups use to its full advantage.

Once the conveners opened the meeting to discussion things really became lively. User group leaders shared successes and failures and asked for opinions on ideas in the formative stage. The end result was an avalanche. One good idea triggered another. Twists on old favourites made us all realise that focusing on the "computer" in computer user groups can limit our vision. Many groups are grabbing the attention of people in their communities with techniques used successfully time and time again, modifying attention-grabbing activities to suit their groups, rather than trying to invent totally new computer-focused techniques. The take-away message? Think about how user groups are like other groups, and learn from them, rather than always trying to invent the next wheel.

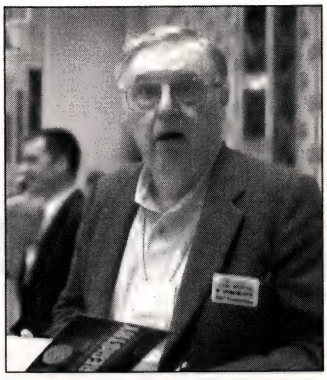
Communication, beyond the printed page

If I could pick one APCUG roundtable to be re-run for Melb PC, it would be Lillian Milliner's "How to communicate with your members". Lillian is the President of Capital PC User Group Inc. I've long been a fan of her monthly column, President's Notes, in CPCUG's Monitor, where she often focuses on volunteerism and the role each member must play if a group is to flourish. She does it in a way that recognises the many different contributions members make. As a professional trainer and author,

Lillian's roundtable was not only the most polished, but the most innovative. She had us using all our senses as she tried to improve our understanding of non-verbal communication. Guess what? Most groups have similar problems. The difference between those that succeed and those that fall by the wayside may have more to do with how they handle problems than the severity of the problems. There were many gems from Lillian's roundtable, but two really hit home. The first is that setting and communicating boundaries can make the difference between healthy, happy volunteers and burnt-out volunteers. The second, that a user group is a community of individuals coming together to share experiences; within that community, each individual is both a student and a teacher.

The highlight of this editor's trip

The next two roundtables on my schedule had been marked with red ink. They were "must sees". Not only because the topics "How to give good meetings" led by John Woram and "Effective Writing of Product Reviews", led by John Woram and Mike Elgan, are vitally important to Melb PC and *PC Update*, but also because of the presenters. If you don't recognise the names, John Woram is Consulting Editor, Windows Magazine, author of *The Windows 95 Registry: A Survival Guide for Users*, MIS Press, 1996, and the Windows SIG Chair for the Long Island PC Users Group. Mike Elgan is the Editor of *Windows* magazine (his monthly *Start* column is required reading in my house).



John Woram: "Did I say that?"

As it turned out, John's entertaining descriptions of classic meeting problems would have been reason enough to attend. But he wrapped up with sound advice that, if implemented, can go a long way towards solving those problems. "Each user group needs a Meeting Co-ordinator—someone who will run the meeting with an iron hand, keep an eye on the clock, keep the speakers (**and** the audience) on track, and make sure there's a beginning, middle and end to each presentation. The reward for giving good meetings is that vendors will actually enjoy coming to a meeting where they're treated with respect, and find they're in good hands. Members will realise the meeting really does start on time, that it will be well paced and that it will end before they're too exhausted to make it home." To which we all said, "Amen".

For the product review roundtable, John and Mike were joined by Intuit's Richard Katz, a surprise guest who gave us a vendor's point of view on the reviewing process. It was time to get knee-deep in issues, theories and philosophies that make non-editors run, screaming, from the room, while holding their hands over their ears. For editors, it was the stuff of dreams.

That, readers, is a short summary of Saturday's highlights. I'll write about Sunday's events and some of the special vendor presentations in the March issue of *PC Update*. □

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Ted Snell

Dual booting Win 95 and Win 3.x

I have found that Windows 3.x and Windows 95 can both be installed on the one computer and either version of Windows chosen for operation during bootup. Win 3.x must be installed and operational before proceeding with the installation of Win 95.

What is reported here works for me! Unfortunately this is no guarantee that it will work for you! Be warned, as with most computer activities, one false step could mean a complete re-installation of all the programs and data on your hard disk.

Be prepared, have a complete up-to-date backup of your hard disk.

Having installed Win 3.x successfully, and before beginning the installation of Win 95, take a few additional precautions as a time-saving insurance against future problems:

- Create a new directory on the boot hard disk. If you have DOS 6.22, the suggested name for the directory is DOS6_22. For a different version of DOS choose a name to match your version
- Copy all your DOS files from the current DOS directory to the new directory. The need for this duplicate set of DOS files will be explained later
- Find your emergency floppy bootup disk, or if you have lost it, create a new one. (DOS command FORMAT A:/S creates a system disk in drive A with the files MSDOS.SYS, IO.SYS and COMMAND.COM correctly installed on the disk. From the DOS directory, copy the file SYS.COM to this disk.) If you have found your emergency bootup disk, make sure that it has a copy of SYS.COM on it
- On another floppy disk make a copy of all but three of the files in your boot drive root directory. Do not copy the files MSDOS.SYS, IO.SYS or COMMAND.COM
- Begin the installation of Win 95 in accordance with the manual, then proceed as follows:

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techniques to help you install Windows 95, without losing your Windows 3.x system

- Choose to install Win 95 from DOS not Windows 3.x—the less that Win 3.x and Win 95 have to do with each other the better. The installation recommendation to do it via Win 3.x is best ignored
- At the appropriate questions during installation:
  - Choose the procedure that allows Win 95 to be uninstalled in the future. (This will save the existing DOS from extinction.)
  - Choose any hard disk drive for the installation of Windows 95. If it is a drive other than the boot drive, Win 95 will create a hidden directory on the boot drive with the same name as the one that you give to the main Win 95 directory, and a number of files will be installed in it
  - The name of the directory for the Win 95 files cannot be the same as that for the Win 3.x directory. If the latter directory is called WINDOWS, choose a name such as WINDOW 95 for the Win 95 directory. Do not change the name of the Win 3.x directory.

At the end of the installation procedure Win 95 should be up and running. At this point close down Win 95 (click *Start*, then *Shutdown*, then *Yes* in the dialogue box) but when you are told that it is safe to turn off the computer, simply press the Reset button.

During reboot when the message *Starting Windows 95...* appears, press F8.

The *Microsoft Windows 95 Startup Menu* appears. Choose *Previous version of DOS*. Make a note of its item number in the menu—you will have need of it soon!

The computer will boot up using the old CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files. Start Win 3.x if it has not been already started by the AUTOEXEC.BAT file. Next select *File Manager* and display the root directory of C:. If hidden files are not displayed, select *View* on the Menu Bar, then choose *By File Type* on the pull-down menu, then click in the *Show Hidden Files* check box to select it.

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You will see many new files in the root directory of your boot disk. Of greatest interest are MSDOS.W40, CONFIG.W40 and AUTOEXEC.W40. Win 95 has a version number of 4.00.950—so guess what the file extension .W40 stands for! At the moment CONFIG.W40 and AUTOEXEC.W40 are slightly modified versions of the original CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files. Win 95 does all the necessary file juggling once you have indicated whether you want the *Previous version of DOS* or *Normal* (this means Win 95) from the *Microsoft Windows 95 Startup Menu*.

The file extensions are changed to meet the requirements of the selected item in the startup menu. The extensions .SYS and .BAT must be applied to the files that match the selected bootup procedure, e.g. for the present situation the .SYS and .BAT files are those required for the *Previous version of DOS* bootup, while the files for the Win 95 boot which are not required are named CONFIG.W40 and AUTOEXEC.W40. For the Win 95 boot the .W40 files are re-named CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT, while the files associated with the *Previous version of DOS* are renamed CONFIG.DOS and AUTOEXEC.DOS.

If you know what to do to edit the CONFIG and AUTOEXEC files, proceed to change the .SYS. files to suit your Win 3.x operation, and the .W40 files for Win 95—otherwise see an expert.

MSDOS.W40 is a special file that, amongst other things, allows you to tailor the operation of the *Microsoft Windows 95 Startup Menu*. Special care must be taken not to alter any of the contents of the file other than the listings under the heading [OPTIONS].

As with the CONFIG and AUTOEXEC files, the section of MSDOS.W40 that is of interest is altered with a text editor such as the DOS utility EDIT. If you know what to do proceed as follows, otherwise call in an expert.

MSDOS.W40 is a read-only, system, hidden file hence in this form it cannot be altered. The first step is therefore to remove the attributes R, S and H. Next, add any of the following options not in the list, and amend any options which differ from the list below. Do not delete or change any other options which are in the file but not listed here.

```
BootMulti=1
BootGUI=1
BootMenu=1
BootMenuDefault=(see note)
```

Note: The options shown above cause the *Microsoft Windows 95 Startup Menu* to appear at bootup without having to press F8. The *Startup Menu* will also highlight the choice whose number you enter here. If you enter "1" (no quotes) for the BootMenuDefault, the menu item "1. Normal" will be highlighted and a 30 second countdown will begin as soon as the *Startup Menu* appears.

You may either press Enter to complete the selection of "1", or you may allow "1" to be automatically selected at the end of the 30 second countdown. If you enter the item number for *Previous Version of DOS* (noted earlier—usually 7 or 8), instead of booting to Win 95, it will follow the same procedure and boot to your previous version of DOS, which will load Windowa 3.x, if the AUTOEXEC.BAT tells it to.

During the 30 second countdown you are able to select any of the menu items.

When you have amended MSDOS.W40 remember to restore the attributes R, S and H to it.

The COMMAND files follow the same naming pattern as the CONFIG and AUTOEXEC files—the active file is named COMMAND.COM while the inactive file will have the extension .W40 or .DOS.

The DOS associated with Win 95 is called DOS 7. DOS 7 is really DOS 6.x plus the extra files added to it by Win 95 that duplicate functions already existing in DOS 6.x, e.g. SCANDISK—the new version supports long file and directory names.

The greatest problem associated with having Win 3.x and Win 95 on the same computer is that Win 95 supports long file and directory names, which can contain spaces. Where such files or directories exist you must use the Win 95 backup/restore programs or other backup programs that are totally compatible with Win 95. Also, call SCANDISK and DEFRAG from Win 95 not from the previous version of DOS.

Windows 3.x and later versions of DOS will display the long Win 95 names by using the first 6 characters of the name and adding a ~ (tilde) to indicate that the first 6 characters are only the beginning of a longer name, and a number is also added. The number covers the likelihood of more than one long name having the first 6 characters the same as another long name.

When things go wrong

If you need to re-install Win 95, unless you remove particular Win 95 files not touched by the Win 95 uninstall program, it is not possible to retain the facility to select the previous DOS, and hence Win 3.x. (A Microsoft feature.)

I have successfully re-installed Win 95, retaining DOS 6.22 and Win 3.x, many times now. I wasted much time trying to determine which files and directories had to be removed. Eventually I decided to keep the whole process as simple and straightforward as possible.

My solution is not to use the Win 95 uninstall program but to erase all the directories and files associated with Win 95 from the drive and to restore the system to its standard of operation before the installation of Win 95.

Unfortunately, for the first part of the exercise you will need a working Win 95 system to delete the files in the directory PROGRAM FILES. This is not a valid DOS directory name (more than 8 characters and a space between words). Only Win 95 can handle such directory or file names, as DOS (even DOS 7) will refuse to deal with them. The directory PROGRAM FILES is not a subdirectory of the directory we have called WINDOW 95. To proceed, run Win 95, close any programs running under it, choose *Start*, then *Programs*, then *Windows Explorer*. Erase all the files and sub-directories in the directory PROGRAM FILES, then erase the directory.

To erase the files and subdirectories of the directory WINDOW 95, Win 95 must be shut down. Close Win 95 now, and if you can, open Win 3.x. Your only other choice is to use DOS commands.

The original DOS files are assumed to be held in the directory named DOS. Win 95 adds files to the DOS directory. These files perform the same functions as the DOS files, but operate with some aspects of Win 95 not compatible with DOS. The DOS files are still needed for DOS and the new files are needed for Win 95. The files which perform the same function have slightly different names, but, as with files mentioned earlier, the operational name is applied to the file associated with the system operating at the time.

I had copied all the original DOS 6.22 files to the DOS6_22 directory, thus to start with, identical files were held in both the DOS and the DOS6_22 directories. Because the DOS directory now contains additional files put there

by Win 95, all that needs to be done to restore the DOS directory to its original state is to erase all files in the DOS directory then copy all the files from the DOS6_22 directory.

Next, with the exception of MSDOS.SYS and IO.SYS, erase all the files in the root directory, including COMMAND.COM.

Note: Considerable time is saved if you are able to use a program to erase files that are read-only, system or hidden. DOS neither shows system and hidden files in directory listings, nor will it allow you to erase them or read-only files. With Win 3.x File Manager you can choose to both display and erase these files, but if you are in trouble, Win 3.x may not be available.

You have copies of all the C: drive root directory files (purposely without MSDOS.SYS and IO.SYS) from the original DOS operation now on a floppy disk. Copy these files to the C: drive root directory.

If Win 3.x is installed on the boot drive and Win 95 is in the WINDOW 95 directory on the same drive, erase all files and subdirectories in the WINDOW 95 directory, and the directory itself.

If Win 95 was installed in a WINDOW 95 directory on another drive, then there will be a WINDOW 95 hidden directory containing a small number of files on the boot drive. Erase all files in that directory and then erase the directory. Erase all the files and subdirectories in the WINDOW 95 directory on the other drive.

You should have a DOS bootup system disk as outlined above, which was constructed from the original installation of DOS. In addition to the read-only, system, hidden files MSDOS.SYS and IO.SYS properly installed, there is the appropriate COMMAND.COM file and the file copied from DOS—SYS.COM.

The computer should now be turned off, and after a few seconds turned on again and the bootup disk placed in A:. When the bootup is complete, transfer the system files from the floppy disk to the hard disk (type SYS C: at the DOS prompt). The system files on drive C: (installed with Win 95) are replaced by the original DOS 6.22 system files.

Check that the computer is operating as it did before Win 95. If not, clear all problems before beginning the re-installation of Win 95.

At this point everything is ready for another attempt to install Win 95 while retaining the old DOS and Win 3.x. □

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BJ300/330	BJI642	3 black	$35
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	BCI21Bk	30 black	$45
	BCI21C	10 each colour	$45
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Make the most of your Windows

Most people appreciate Windows 95's much improved graphical user interface (GUI). The GUI shell and the Windows Explorer, which add to the desktop metaphor, are very closely related. This article gives you some handy and useful tips on getting much more from your Win 95 environment.

Jumping to Win 95

When you first install Windows 95 over your Windows 3.x (this may be too late for most users), you can still use your old program groups. To do this, simply copy the *.GRP files to your Win 95 directory and then start GRPCONV.EXE from *Start/Run*. All groups will be automatically added to your *Start* menu. This very handy utility saves you manually re-creating program and group entries.

Browsing the file system

Most people are now used to browsing directories visually, but those still living in an MS-DOS box often prefer to "CD" to their favourite directories. So, to ease the transition to visual browsing, you can open any directory visually by going to *Start/Run* and then enter the directory name like C:\WINDOWS. This will not work in a DOS shell but works quite well from the *Run* menu. It's also worth mentioning that you can browse MS-Network connections by supplying the server and directory name such as

```
\\SERVER_NAME\SHARED_DIR
```

This saves you visually browsing the network neighborhood and allows you to go to your directories much faster.

Quick properties

To find the properties of an item, most people still use the right-click and select Properties method. Those familiar with Win 3's way of life may have found pressing Alt+Enter on the currently selected item yields the properties. But there is another, faster method. Simply hold down the Alt key and double-click the item—almost the same as the Alt+Enter method without the Enter key.

Starting Explorer faster

Going to *My Computer* (or desktop links to drives) and pressing Shift while double-clicking on a hard drive, starts up Explorer at the root directory for the selected drive. If you are really in a hurry, you can even multi-select several hard drives and start an Explorer for each drive. Additionally, if you can't find the Explorer icon on your desktop or in your programs, right click on the start button and select it from there. You can even open the *Start* menu from here or the *Find files* assistant.

Explorer managing

For those still struggling with one Explorer window, why not start two, side-by-side? You can quickly browse in one and drag-and-drop to the other. To do this magic, minimise all windows except for these two Explorer windows, and right-click on the task-bar selecting Tile vertically or horizontally. This will auto-arrange the two windows for you. You can also use this method to quickly cascade or arrange all windows. You probably knew this already, right?

The task bar

If you are tired of having the task bar at the bottom of the screen, just click on it and drag to the top, left or right edge of the screen. And if you ever run a lot of applications and find yourself with many minimised apps, enlarge the task bar just as you would any window. Position the pointer over the edge of the bar and, when it changes shape to a double-ended arrow, click and start dragging. It is also convenient that each of the four possible locations of the bar remembers the size you have selected.

Explorer folder joys

Using Explorer can be rather annoying as all folders are not fully exposed. A stray finger pressing a "*" or "+" reveals all subdirectories for the currently selected drive or folder. To compact them,

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use the "-" key. Can I safely assume that everyone knows that F5 refreshes the Explorer window, F2 renames items and F3 opens *Find File* assistant?

Customising the Start menus

Those used to Xwindows under UNIX are probably familiar with customising pop-up menus. We can do this under Win 95 with Explorer. Within your Win 95 directory (C:\WINDOWS for most users) take a look at the Start Menu directory. In here a directory corresponds to a pop-up menu under the Start button. Adding directories or Shortcuts (links) in this or any sub-directories adds them to the menus. So much easier than hacking UNIX scripts.

Making it more like a Mac

Macintosh users may be used to seeing small thumbnails of pictures stored on their drives. Many Windows users don't know that we also have this facility. By editing the registry we, too, can enjoy seeing thumbnails for any BMP file on our system. Do this by starting up the REGEDIT.EXE (registry editor) application from Start/Run menu. Then search for Paint.Picture or manually go to HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT/Paint.Picture/DefaultIcon location in the registry tree. Change the value for DefaultIcon to %1, which forces Windows to use the file as its icon. When you browse your hard disk, you'll find all BMP files have thumbnails. This may degrade performance on slow systems with lots of bitmaps or minimal memory.

Drag-and-drop

Drag-and-dropping has more applications than just copying and moving files. You can create scrap notes by selecting text (highlighting) in applications such as Word or Write, and then dragging it onto the desktop. This creates post-it-note-like document scraps. Double-clicking them brings them up in their respective editors. Another handy use is to drag application links (shortcuts) into editors like Word. The application's icon appears in the text and can be activated by double-clicking. OLE, or should I be MS-correct and call it COM power?

Customising the Starting and Shutdown screens

If you don't know how to change your starting and shutting-down Windows pictures, look for C:\LOGO.SYS (loading), C:\WINDOWS\LOGOW.SYS (please wait while..) and C:\WINDOWS\LOGOS.SYS (switch off) files. Make sure that your new images are 256-colour BMP files with a resolution of 320 x 400 pixels.

Fast reboot

Finally, those who have had the pleasure of installing Windows always dread the cold system reboots when adding/removing hardware. You must remember to say NO to the automatic system reboot after making changes and manually initiate system *Shut Down*. In most versions of Win 95, when you see the *Shut Down Windows* window, select the *Restart the Computer* option, and press Shift while clicking the *Yes* button. This will not reboot your machine, but merely shuts down Windows and restarts it as if after a clean boot. It's worth remembering that this may not always work, because some hardware or system changes require a cold boot. This works quite well as a substitute for most reboots, without waiting for the whole system to re-initialise.

About the author

Peter Stanski is a freelance computer consultant and developer. He is currently working towards his Ph.D at Monash University.

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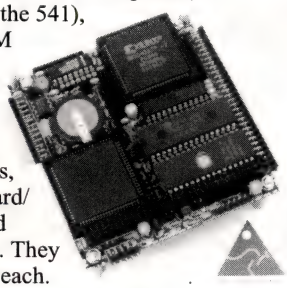

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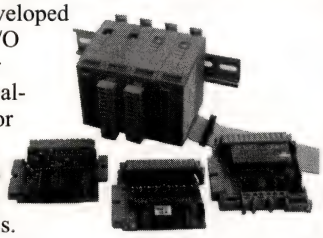

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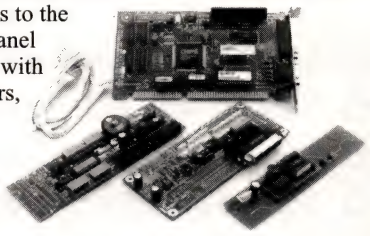

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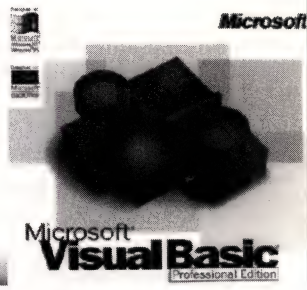

Seeing the Basics: Did you know?

This column provides techniques, tips, and tricks to help you gain familiarity and experience with MS Visual Basic, a popular language that enables you to write quickly both Windows and World Wide Web applications.

Visual Basic 5.0 is a great product, but also an extensive, and sometimes complex one. Even for accomplished VB developers, there's always something new to learn or a programming mystery to unravel. So, this month's column looks at some different and interesting aspects of the language, presented under the general title of "Did you know?"

Grouping objects alphabetically

Did you know: It is recommended to use a three-character prefix to name objects and variables you use in your programs. For example, the prefixes "CBO", "TXT", and "CMD" are conventionally used to name combo boxes, text boxes, and command buttons respectively. To find out more about them, most VB books are likely to contain a table listing the full set. There are two advantages to using these prefixes. Firstly, it makes it easier to debug programs because you know exactly what sort of object is being referred to. And secondly, when you use the Object list box in the Code window, all the objects will be listed in alphabetical order, as well as conveniently grouped together by type.

Fast access to VB's set of toolbars

Did you know: You can display the various VB toolbars, for example, the Edit, Debug, or the Form Editor toolbars, by right clicking with your mouse on an empty section of the VB main menu bar. And once any toolbar has been displayed, you can then right click on its title bar to get quick access to the rest of them.

A brief history of Basic and Visual Basic

Did you know: The Basic programming language was created in 1963 by John Kemeny and Thomas Kurtz, two professors at Dartmouth College. Its name is really an acronym for Beginner's All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code. Then in the 1970s, Bill Gates adapted it for use on PCs.

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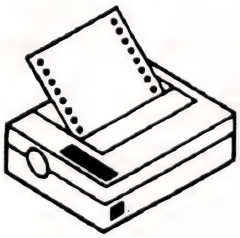

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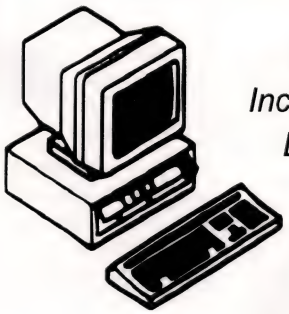

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In fact, it was in October 1975 that Microsoft Basic was released for 4 KB and 8 KB computers. The language then evolved into different versions such as Microsoft QuickBasic and MS-DOS QBasic. However, in mid-1991, the way in which Windows applications were to be programmed was irrevocably altered with the first release of Microsoft's Visual Basic.

Leaving debug statements in a VB application

Did you know: The Debug.Print statement can be a handy way to debug a tricky part of a VB application. The output from this statement is sent to the Immediate Window which you can look at to see what is happening internally within your program. To display the Immediate Window when you're in VB Design mode, click View on the main menu bar followed by the Immediate Window option (alternatively use the keyboard combination of Ctrl+G). However, once you've got your application running correctly, and you're ready to create an executable version of it, there's no need to physically remove the Debug.Print statements from your code. They simply will not appear when your program is run from a compiled executable because they will have been automatically de-activated during the compilation process.

Gaining the right image

Did you know: The Image control's Picture property can accommodate the following six types of graphics files: bitmaps (.BMP files), Windows metafiles (.WMF files), icons (.ICO files), cursors (.CUR files), JPEG format (.JPG files), and GIF format (.GIF files). If you attempt to load an image control with a graphics file which doesn't correspond to one of these formats, for example, a file in TIFF format, your VB program will crash. The runtime error message will inform you that an invalid graphics format was assigned to the Picture property of the image control. One possible work around in a situation like this is to convert the TIFF graphic into another format, for example, into JPEG format. This can easily be achieved using a graphics program like Paint Shop Pro which is available as shareware. Note however that depending upon the contents of the graphic file being converted, you might sometimes experience some loss in its quality or colour intensity. And finally, if your application allows users to dynamically select graphics when the program is executing, bullet-proof your code to ensure that any graphic selected corresponds to one of the six acceptable formats listed above.

Improved readability

Did you know: It's theoretically possible, if you so desire, to use more than a thousand characters in any line of code in your program (the upper limit is actually 1023 characters). However, if you do so, you or anyone else who has to maintain your program will be constantly scrolling the screen to see the remainder of each line. It is far more advisable to limit the number of characters you use to about 50, and have a self-imposed absolute upper limit of 70 characters. By using these sorts of limits, as well as ensuring the code window is expanded to take up as much screen real estate as possible, you'll be able to comfortably look at, and edit, your programs. Nevertheless there will be those occasions where you'll want to split a logical line of code over two or more physical lines to improve readability of your program. This is easily done using Visual Basic's line continuation character, the underscore (_), at the spot in the line where you want the split to occur. Note however the line continuation character cannot be used to split up a string contained within quotation marks, or to break up a Visual Basic keyword.

More interesting facts about VB

Next month's *Seeing the Basics* will continue with part two of "Did you know?" about MS Visual Basic.

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With over 11,500 members, Melbourne PC User Group Inc is the world's largest PC User Group. It was founded in 1983, and is still run for its members, people like *you*.

The Group employs full- and part-time office staff. Other services are provided by contractors, but most functions of the club—magazine writing and editing, online services maintenance, collection and distribution of shareware, organisation of SIG and monthly meetings, etc, are performed by volunteers.

The Group has a membership from all walks of life, with a broad range of computer skills. This vast store of knowledge gives members access to information and help in many fields.

Magazine

Melb PC's magazine, *PC Update*, is sent to members 11 times a year. *PC Update* publishes articles written by members and all members are welcome, indeed encouraged, to write articles on topics they know about, to share with others. *PC Update* occasionally reprints articles from overseas user groups, to keep our members as up-to-date as possible.

PC Update has won awards every time it has entered the International User Groups' Newsletter Contest. Many people join the Group just for the value *PC Update* provides, and then discover all the other benefits of membership. A year's membership of Melb PC, which includes having *PC Update* delivered to you, costs about as much as it does to buy the year's issues over the counter.

Computer First-Aid and Dial Help

This unique service is made available free to members by volunteers within the Group who give their time and knowledge to assist with computing problems you may have. About 300 telephone numbers of unpaid volunteers, with day- and night-time contacts, are mailed to members with their *PC Update*. The service covers over 120 separate topics.

Training

The Group provides training in a wide range of computer skills, from starting with computers to advanced topics.

Melb PC has its own fully equipped training centre, using networked Pentium systems. Courses are run as a service to members, making them very cost-competitive when compared to similar courses elsewhere.

The classroom environment has one computer per student. Most classes are run during evenings or weekends, when parking is readily available. The rooms are easily accessible by public transport.

A list of courses on offer to members appears in each issue of *PC Update*.

Monthly Meeting

Each month, except January, Melb PC holds a meeting, open to members and visitors. It is usually addressed by representatives from the computer industry on topics of general interest. Software and other products are given away. The speakers include many from Australian vendors and distributors—also we have been addressed by CEOs such as Bill Gates, Philippe Kahn, Gordon Eubanks and others who made special visits to address our members.

There is the ability to address questions to the membership at large, seeking advice or problem-solving. Shareware and diskettes are sold and members socialise and discuss anything that takes their fancy—even computers!

Following the meeting many members gather for a meal, arranged at a convenient restaurant, at "user-friendly" prices.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

The Group has SIGs covering many aspects of computer use. A SIG can deal with any topic, ranging from particular applications to hardware and programming, or how to get the best from your equipment.

Meeting dates, places and contacts for SIGs are in each *PC Update*, with reports of past and future activities. All SIGs are available to all members.

Bulletin Board

Melb PC operates a free 23-hours-a-day, 34-line bulletin board system (BBS) as another member service.

The BBS has two main functions—electronic mail and message exchange, and file transfer facilities. The mail and messaging facilities enable members to exchange messages with each other and to seek help on a wide range of topics, not only from other members but also from the world-wide PC community.

The BBS carries many files on a range of topics. These have been uploaded by members who found them useful and can be downloaded by other members.

Internet Service

Melb PC offers a 216-line Internet service at up to 56 kbps, providing access to www, e-mail, Usenet, ftp, irc, gopher, telnet, etc.

Registration is required using the Internet Application Form, and is available to family joint-users. This popular service is constantly being expanded and enhanced to serve a increasing number of members.

Software Library

Melb PC maintains an extensive and up-to-date software library of programs (over 1300 disks, with about 50 new disks added each month) for IBM-type personal computers, obtained from around the world. This library of shareware software is available only to Melb PC members and is supplied on new disks at very low prices.

An order form for this software is in every issue of *PC Update*.

Shareware Registration

Much of the most popular software on Melb PC's Bulletin Board and in its software library is shareware, i.e. try free and pay only if you like and use it.

The club organises bulk shareware registrations, usually at a discount.

Club-organised registrations also save members the costs of US-dollar bank drafts and overseas postage. □

Melb PC Membership Application/Renewal

Personal details

Membership number (if renewing)

Title Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Miss ☐ Ms ☐ Dr ☐ Oth. ☐ Ref: PCU 0298

First name ☐ Middle initial ☐

Last name ☐

Postal address ☐

☐

☐ Postcode ☐

Country ☐

Business phone (☐) ☐ ☐

Home phone (☐) ☐ ☐

Job title ☐

Employer ☐

I do ☐ / do not ☐ want to receive occasional promotional mail from commercial organisations.

I hereby apply for membership of Melbourne PC User Group Inc. and agree to abide by its rules while I am a member.

Signature ☐

Date ☐

Membership details

Type	New	Renewal	Amount
Individual (extra family members at $10 each)	$60 ☐	$50 ☐	$ ☐
	$10 ☐	$10 ☐	$ ☐
Corporate (two representatives, extra representatives at $60 each)	$130 ☐	$120 ☐	$ ☐
	$60 ☐	$60 ☐	$ ☐
Student or **Pensioner** (see notes)	$50 ☐	$40 ☐	$ ☐
	$50 ☐	$40 ☐	$ ☐

Notes:

- Students must attach a photocopy of student card or letter from educational institution confirming *full-time* student status.
- Pensioners must attach a photocopy of both sides of their Pension Concession Card.
- Please attach a list if more than one family or corporate member is being nominated with this application.
- Corporate members may change representatives by giving notice in writing to the secretary.

Total $ ☐

How did you learn about Melb PC? Please complete the appropriate details.

☐ PC Update ☐ Swap Meet ☐ Friend (please give name and number following)

Member No: ☐ Name: ☐

☐ Other (give details) ☐

For membership application or renewal, or training orders, please use the remittance and/or credit card form on the next page

Training order form

Course Title	Starting Date	Amount
☐	...../...../.....	☐ . ☐
☐	...../...../.....	☐ . ☐
☐	...../...../.....	☐ . ☐
	Total:	☐ . ☐

Top choice shareware

These are some of the most popular volumes in the Melb PC Shareware/ Freeware library. Refer to the regular catalogue updates in *PC Update* for up-to-date listings of other disks—use the lower part of this order form for your choice from those listings.

Shareware/PD Title	Melb No.	Format	Qty	Amount
Shareware Catalogue & New Member Disk	0000	3.5 / 5.25		
Graphics Workshop for DOS	8015	3.5		
Graphics Workshop for Windows 3.x	8064	3.5		
Graphics Workshop for Windows 95	8562	3.5		
Growit	8157	3.5		
List	1490	3.5 / 5.25		
McAfee VirusScan for DOS	8018	3.5		
McAfee VirusScan for Windows 3.x (2-disk set)	8626–27	3.5		
McAfee VirusScan for Windows 95 (4-disk set)	8893–96	3.5		
MS-DOS 6.22 Stepup from 6.0 (3-disk set)	8110–12	3.5		
PKZip/PKUnzip	1235	3.5 / 5.25		
Real Audio Player for Windows 3.x	8364	3.5		
Real Audio Player for Windows 95	8592	3.5		
Telix for DOS	8062	3.5		
Telix for Windows v1.00 (2-disk set)	8129/30	3.5		
Wolfenstein Fights Street Fighter II	8012	3.5		
Melb PC Internet kits (special prices)				
Windows 3.x @$10 per set (3-disk set)	8711–13	3.5		
Windows 95 @$20 per set (6-disk set)	8714–19	3.5		
		3.5 / 5.25		
		3.5 / 5.25		
		3.5 / 5.25		
		3.5 / 5.25		
		3.5 / 5.25		
		3.5 / 5.25		

Postage/Packing is included. Costs: first disk (per order) $5, second disk $4, third and subsequent disks $3 each **Total:**

I am ☐ under 15 years of age ☐ under 18 years of age ☐ over 18 years of age Signature:

Buy your diskettes from Melb PC

Order details

Brand/Size	Cost (Box of 10)	Number of boxes	Value
Memorex 5.25-inch HD (1.2 MB)	$12.50		
Memorex 3.5-inch HD (1.44 MB)	$15.00		
Generic preformatted 3.5-inch HD (1.44 MB)	$5.00		
Postage and packing	$5 per order:		$5.00
Enclose a cheque or use the credit card authority below	Total: $		

Important: Please complete the following for both shareware and diskette orders.

Member details

Name

Membership number:

Delivery details

Delivery

Address

State Postcode

Payment Details/Credit Card Authority
Forward to Melb PC, PO Box 283, South Melbourne VIC 3205, Australia

I enclose a cheque made payable to Melbourne PC User Group Inc. for $ Date

Please debit my: Bankcard Visa MasterCard with $ Card expiry date

Card number

Business hours phone number ( )

Card holder's name Signature

Internet access application form

Instructions

- Please **read** the entire form. It may be photocopied.
- Complete **every** field else it might be returned to you. Each field has a purpose, which includes updating our database.
- Enclose a cheque or authorise a charge against your credit card for the requisite amount. Send the form with payment to

  Melbourne PC User Group
  PO Box 283
  South Melbourne VIC 3205

Description of service

- **General.** The Melbourne PC User Group Inc (Melb PC) Internet Service network (the Network) is a private telecommunications network owned and operated by Melb PC for its members. It is administered by the Internet Subcommittee (the Subcommittee) as a subscriber-funded service.
- **Function of the Melb PC Network.** The primary function of the Network is to support the free transfer of information to and from Melb PC members, subject to the terms of our Acceptable Use Policy.
- **Standard Service.** SLIP/PPP accounts.
- **Features:**
  - Electronic Mail.
  - We also provide access to other services that are found on the Internet but they are not under our control.
- **Charges**. Annual fee $140, subject to change from time to time.
- **Limits and Quotas.** Up to 120 minutes access per day (non-cumulative). A bank of modems is made available with a time limit of 30 minutes for the benefit of users who need to check their mail and get off quickly. The Mail quota is 4 MB. Excess mail may be deleted.
- **Access Software.** You will need to acquire and configure suitable software from our Shareware library or other resources.
- **Accounts.** Accounts are issued only to individuals, not company names. Melb PC may reject an application without stating a reason.
- **Support.** Volunteers offer their help in local newsgroups, via our free Bulletin Board Service, or by telephone.
- **Training.** Melb PC offers training courses.
- **Duration.** The subscription to the Network is for one year from the date of acceptance. It automatically terminates upon expiry of membership of Melb PC.
- **Acknowledgment.** Successful applicants will include individuals whose forms are correctly filled out and whose funds have been transferred to our bank account.
- **Net Etiquette.** Melb PC endorses adherence to ("net etiquette" or "netiquette") as deemed by the subcommittee from time to time.

Internet access agreement

Definitions

"Melb PC" means The Melbourne PC User Group Incorporated or its assignee;

"the subscriber" means the Melb PC member making this application;

"family subscriber" refers to an existing Melb PC Family Member, or a member of the family residing at the same address who applies for Melb PC Family Membership at this same time, paying the additional $10 Melb PC membership in addition to the Internet subscription;

"Internet access" means access to the World Wide Web, Internet e-mail and any additional Internet facilities Melb PC may offer to its members from time to time, but unless Melb PC agrees otherwise does not include supply or maintenance of the subscriber's equipment, software or telephone line, or technical support;

"subscription period" means the period in advance for which the subscriber has paid in full, being one of the periods of subscription offered by Melb PC from time to time;

1. The subscriber asks Melb PC to provide Internet access and Melb PC agrees to do so.
2. This agreement starts when an authorised officer of Melb PC has executed it and Melb PC has received cleared payment for the subscription period.
3. Subject to the early termination clauses of this agreement and to clause 4, this agreement continues until the end of the subscription period.
4. If Melb PC and the subscriber renew this agreement for a further subscription period, this agreement applies to the renewed subscription period unless the parties agree otherwise in writing.
5. The subscriber acknowledges that:
   a. Continuity and speed of the Internet access depends on a wide range of factors, many of which are beyond the control of Melb PC;
   b. Melb PC has no control over the accuracy or appropriateness of any information on the Internet;
   c. Melb PC is not responsible for any material available on the Internet;
   d. The subscriber's Internet access may be interrupted by equipment failure, the need for routine maintenance, peak demand and so on;
   e. Melb PC cannot guarantee that the subscriber will be able to secure access at any given time, or that fluctuations in demand by other subscribers will not prevent the subscriber from using the full amount of the maximum daily time allowance on any given day.
6. Subject to matters of the kind referred to in the previous clause and to the subscriber's access limits, Melb PC will use its best endeavours to keep Internet access available continuously and to allow the subscriber to have access for the current daily time allowance from time to time.
7. The subscriber indemnifies Melb PC against any liability, claim, action, suit, demand, loss, cost or expense arising out of or in any way connected with this agreement or Internet access, including any negligence by Melb PC, its servants or agents.
8. The subscriber will pay fees according to Melb PC's standard pricing list from time to time, and a copy of the list certified by an officer of Melb PC is conclusive evidence of the prices applicable at any time.
9. Melb PC may make rules for the use by the subscriber of Internet access, including rules as to online time limits, transmission volume limits, excess usage fees, terms of payment and any other matter at all that Melb PC considers desirable, provided that there shall be no reduction in the access time of the subscriber during any period for which the subscriber has paid in advance unless the service provided by Melb PC has been or is to be enhanced so as to make up for any lost value. Melb PC may alter the rules on not less than fourteen days notice to the subscriber. A copy of the rules certified by an officer of Melb PC is conclusive evidence of the rules applicable at any time. The rules from time to time will apply as if they were set out in full as terms of this agreement.
10. The subscriber must not deliberately or recklessly do anything that damages Melb PC's equipment, software, setup or services.
11. The subscriber must not use Internet access to annoy, harass or harm other Internet users.
12. The subscriber must not use Internet access for any unlawful purpose or in any unlawful manner.
13. The subscriber will keep safe and confidential any access numbers, codes or passwords allotted to them by Melb PC and notify Melb PC without delay of any disclosure of those things.
14. Melb PC may terminate the subscriber's Internet access immediately if the subscriber breaches this agreement or the rules, or fails to promptly pay any money owed to Melb PC, or ceases to be a member of Melb PC.
15. Subject to the previous clause, either party may terminate this agreement by 14 days' notice to the other save that Melb PC must not terminate this agreement while the subscriber has credit for advance payment of fees without refunding a pro rata part of those fees or making alternative Internet access arrangements for the subscriber, and termination by the subscriber does not affect any debt owed to Melb PC at the time of termination.
16. Melb PC may delete without notice any material found on its storage disks that is unauthorised, unlawful, obscene, dangerous, excessive in volume, uncollected for an excessive period, or in an unauthorised place.

17. Melb PC may delete without notice any material found on its storage disks without giving any reason for doing so.
18. Melb PC may make and keep any record it requires for the purpose of this agreement or the rules or for the operation of its services.
19. The Description of Service, Internet Access Agreement, and the services as described on this application form constiture the entire agreement between the parties, and neither of them relies on any term, condition, warranty, collateral contract, representation or promise not set out in those parts of this application forms.
20. Any notice given about any matter concerning this agreement may be given by fax, e-mail or post at the last fax number, e-mail or postal address notified to the sender and is deemed to have been received at the time when it would have arrived in the ordinary course of the relevant type of transmission.
21. The subscriber must not transfer, sell or share Internet access rights, or allow the account to be used by any other person, other than those Melb PC Family Members who are listed on this application and have paid the relevant charges.
22. The user's last name must be displayed in all mail and news messages. The user's first name or initials may be displayed as desired.
23. Commercial traffic, in the form of private messages and advertisements in newsgroups designated for that purpose, is permitted within the bounds of net etiquette.
24. The *Organization:* field in private electronic mail or public newsgroup article headers must always be *Melbourne PC User Group, Australia*, the name of the service provider. Any other organisation or business name is permitted only in the four-line (maximum) "signature" text that is optionally inserted at the end of the message or article.
25. Connection of any networking system or device that permits multiple users to share one account simultaneously is not permitted.
26. The *From:* field used in mail and news messages must be the Melb PC assigned user name, e.g. *jjones@melbpc.org.au* not the address where a reply is sought, e.g. *jjones@pobox.com.au*. Such an arrangement should be managed by use of the *Reply-To* field.
27. Melb PC may assign its rights and obligations under this agreement to an Internet access provider that is of equal standard to Melb PC, and after notice of assignment is given to the subscriber, this agreement shall have operation as if it had been entered into between the assignee and the subscriber and Melb PC's rights (except for its right to recover any money owed to it immediately before the assignment) and obligations under this agreement shall be at an end.
28. The parties submit to the law of Victoria, Australia in relation to any the interpretation of this agreement, or any dispute arising out of it. ☐

Service required and payment

Primary Subscription	$ 140.00
Additional Family Subscribers ..... @ $5.00 each	$ .....
Melb PC Internet Kit software	
Windows 3.x version @ $10.00	$ .....
Windows 95 version @ $20.00	$_____
Total	$_____

Tick ☑
☐ Cheque for above total is enclosed.
or
☐ Debit my card with $.....
☐ Bankcard / ☐ MasterCard / ☐ Visa

Expires: ...../.....
Number:

– – – – – – – – – – – – – – – –

Name on Card: .....

Signature: .....

Applicant details

First Name: .....

Last Name: .....

Membership Number: .....

Postal Address: .....

.....

Postcode: .....

Telephone
(day): (.....) .....

Telephone
(evening): (.....) .....

Job Title: .....

Employer: .....

Tick ☑
My age is: ☐ 18 or above. ☐ Below 18.
I hereby apply for the Internet service described on this and the previous page

Signature: .....

Additional Family Members who will share the one account/user name:

Name .....

Signature .....

Name .....

Signature .....

Name .....

Signature .....

Applicant(s) to complete (CAPITALS, please)

Parent/guardian to complete

(If any of the applicants is below the age of 18) I am the parent/guardian of an applicant. I am aware of the nature of information available through the Internet and support this application.

Name: .....
Telephone
(day) (.....) .....

Signature: .....

User name

List below the user ("login") names you would like, in order of preference, up to eight lowercase characters and/or numerals. Write very clearly, to avoid our confusing certain letters. User names are expressed in lowercase letters and numbers and must represent your real name in some recognisable way, e.g. "John J. Jones" might request user names such as "john", "johnj", "jjones", etc.
Any user name that is already allocated or deemed unsuitable in the opinion of the system administrators will not be allocated.
Preferred full name (e.g. *John J Jones* or *Jones Family*), to be recorded on the system.

.....
Previous name (if to be changed):

Choice 1:								
Choice 2:								
Choice 3:								
Choice 4:								
Choice 5:								

Office use only

☑ Tick as applicable:

☐ Form and fee correct

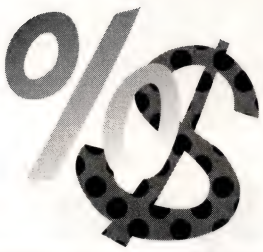
☐ Parent of underage applicant contacted (date) ...../...../199...

☐ Membership database checked and updated

☐ Incomplete form returned to sender (date) ...../...../199...

☐ Acknowledgment returned to sender (date) ...../...../199...

Initials of office staff: .....



Discounts for members

Computer service, parts, support, etc

Austral Data Processing Services
Forest Hill
Ph: 9894 0199
Fax: 9894 7688
20%—(not hardware) on consultancy, data backup/ storage, maintenance, hardware.

Calculator King
St Kilda Road
Ph: 9866 8753
Fax: 9820 9652
10%—all calculators (inc. scientific/financial and speciality). Personal Organisers: Sharp, Casio, HP, Psion.

Compatible Toner and Ink
North Carlton
Ph: 9388 9744
Fax: 9388 9755
15%—Re-manufactured laser printer cartridges and inkjets.

Greensborough Computers
Greensborough
Ph: 9434 6166
Fax: 9434 6033
20%—(labour only) on repairs and upgrades for individual Melb PC Members. 5% on some models of new PC Systems (please enquire).

Metropolis Corporation Pty Ltd
Ferntree Gully
Ph: 9752 4242
Fax: 9752 3777
10%—computer systems (incl. free 24-hour software/ technical support.) $40 for up to two hours maintenance/support

Carl Miller Computer Software and Training
Oakleigh
Ph: 9222 4411 BH
9543 7619 AH
10%—registered copies of Brothers Keeper genealogy software. Local support, manuals & supply of updates. $75 plus postage.

Moon-Ess Computers
Essendon
Ph: 9326 2776
Fax: 9326 2797
10%—service and repairs, new & secondhand parts & systems.

Mountain Visions Pty Ltd
Sunshne North
Ph/Fax: 9310 1063
10% – on labour only — customised software, hardware & software consulting, maintenance, on-site training.

PCLC Computers
Heathmont
Ph/Fax: 9870 3288
20%—labour on upgrades, 5% on some new systems.

Pollock Computer & Technical Services
Hampton
Ph/Fax: 9598 3186
20% – Personal PC tuition & problem solution.

Protege Solutions
Notting Hill
Ph: 9558 9198
Fax: 9558 9197
15%—all fax/modems & ethernet products.

Summit Computers
Lilydale
Ph: 9739 6269
Fax: 9735 0503
20%—on labour (service, networks, etc), 6%—hardware & software.

Members' discounts

If you are a member or advertiser offering a discount on goods or services to Melb PC members, on production of their membership cards, please contact the office to register your offer, which will then be listed in future issues of *PC Update*.

Books, magazines, software, etc

Advanced Computer Products
St. Albans
Ph: 9364 1886
Fax: 9367 3639
20%—all computer books & software.

Capricorn Programming Services
Frankston
Ph: 9775 5377
Fax: 9774 5434
10%—on Scanlab Vol.1 Antivirus & virus education kit.

Collins Booksellers
(Technical and Academic Centre)
Melbourne
Ph: 9654 3144
10%—computer books.

Computer Book Company
Mt Evelyn
Ph: 9737 0411
Fax: 9737 0433
20%—all computer books, mail order.

Cybec Pty Ltd
Hampton
Ph: 9521 0655
Fax: 9521 0729
10%—Vet antivirus software.

Dymocks, Shop 2
Melbourne
Ph: 9663 1344
Fax: 9663 1581
10%—computer books, not on magazines.

Dymocks
Brighton
Ph: 9592 1911
Fax: 9592 1611
10%—computer books.

Dymocks
Westfield Shopping Town, Doncaster
Ph: 9848 7209
Fax: 9848 7307
10%—computer books.

Dymocks
Frankston
Ph: 9770 0300
Fax: 9770 0400
10%—computer books.

Dymocks
Fountain Gate
Ph: 9796 6459
Fax: 9796 6509
10%—computer books.

Dymocks
Pran Central, Prahran
Ph: 9510 2100
Fax: 9519 2520
10%—computer books.

Trevor Gibbs
Melton
Ph: 9743 8917
15%—books: "Windows Whys" and "Easy DOS It", $16.95 ea, $32 for both. Incl diskettes.

ITS Information Technology Systems
Greenvale
Ph/Fax: 9333 2197
20%—computer books, Educational Software.

Mace Booksellers and Stationers
Mount Waverley
Ph: 9807 1899
10%—computer books.

McGills Authorised Newsagency
Melbourne
Ph: 9602 5566
10%—computer books.

Polyester Books
Fitzroy
Ph: 9419 5223
Fax: 9419 5451
10%—on all fiction, science, computer & non-fiction titles, magazines, comics & T-shirts.

RMIT Bookshop
Melbourne
Ph: 9663 5855
Fax: 9663 7528
10%—all books.

Technical Book and Magazine Company
Melbourne
Ph: 9663 3951
10%—computer books.

The Worsley Press
Hastings
Freecall: 1800 622 805
Ph/Fax: 5979 1112
E-mail:
worsley@peg.apc.org
10%—& free postage.

Other services

Adept Accounting and Taxation
Mill Park
Ph: 9436 7604
10%—on all taxation return preparation & business accounting services.

Express Bookkeeping
Carnegie
Ph: 9563 4770
Fax: 9563 4477
10%—on all bookkeeping & financial management services.

Mediware Applications
Camberwell
Ph: 9889 9234
Fax: 9889 9236
5%—(purchase), 10% on training and installation of Dental, Medical (including MedClaims) & Allied Professional Patient Management & billing software.

Min Thong Lee
c/- AP Insurance Brokers
Queen St, Melbourne
Ph: 9602 1869
Fax: 9602 1876
5%—life insurance, loans, home & contents, motor, commercial.

Michaels Camera and Video
Melbourne
Ph: 9670 1333
Fax: 9670 0074
up to 10%—on digital cameras, scanners, Internet video conferencing, scanning bureau.

Mike McKeon Music
Dingley Village
Ph: 9551 7363
5%—on our Octet or 10% on a 14 pce. Big Band & two vocalists. Discount off Musicians' Award rates. For dinner dances, weddings, balls & special events.

Newtech R&D
Kilsyth
Ph/fax: 9723 7535
10%—on electronics consumer product design & Japanese translation.

Sit Right Chairs Pty Ltd
Coburg
Ph: 9354 2612
Fax: 9354 2795
10% – off range of office and ergonomic chairs.

Stewart Smith
Australian Commercial Credit Licenced Insurance Brokers
Ph: 9816 3264
Fax: 9816 3270
25% – off normal costs. Leasing Equipment & cars. Home/commercial mortgage loans.

Tortoise Head Guest House
French Island
Ph: 5980 1234
Fax: 5980 1222
10%—on accommodation, fully catered, adjacent bay.

Quarter Deck B&B
San Remo
Ph: 5678 5485
Mob: 018 550 235
E-mail:
rosco@melbpc.org.au
20% – on B&B stays of two nights or more. Great views and close to many tourist attractions.

Ultimate Business Service Opportunities
Strathmore
Ph: 9483 4417
Fax: 9374 2919
25%—on travel cards that allow 50% off world-wide hotels. 12 month g'tee. □

Special interest group meetings

Access (Database)

Ray Watson
(03) 9576 8520 AH
Fax: (03) 9576 9591
2nd Monday, 6.30 pm
Melb PC SIG Room

Assembly & Other Languages

Felix Hofmann
felix@melbpc.org.au
(03) 9523 5400 AH
1st Thursday, 7.00 pm
Melb PC SIG Room

Ballarat

Ken Smith
kensmith@giant.bnc.com.au
(03) 5332 7851 BH & AH
1st Thursday,
7.30 – 9.45 pm
(except school holidays)
Ballarat & Clarendon College
614 Mair St, Ballarat
VicRoads map 254 L12

Bendigo

Russ Collins
(03) 5439 3708 BH & AH
Joe Henry
joehenry@melbpc.org.au
2nd Wednesday,
7.30 – 10.00 pm
Girton Grammar School
105 Mackenzie St, Bendigo
(Vine Street entrance, then follow the signs)
VicRoads map 282 K14

C/C++ Programming

Ken Holmes
kholmes@melbpc.org.au
(03) 9583 1504 BH & AH
4th Monday, 7.00 pm
Melb PC SIG Room

Clarion

Alan King
(03) 9882 8044 BH
4th Wednesday, 6.30 pm
Suite 9, 96 Camberwell Rd, East Hawthorn
(Through wire gate and up the stairs on the south-east side of Roseberry St)

Communications

Philip Lew
phil@melbpc.org.au
(03) 9822 2998 BH
(brief calls please)
2nd Wednesday, 7.00 pm
Melb PC SIG Room

Daytime

Don Buchanan
donbucha@melbpc.org.au
(03) 9509 7119
Graeme Minto
gm@alphalink.com.au
(03) 9459 3986
2nd Thursday,
10.00 am – 12 noon
Melb PC SIG Room

East

Keith Beresford
keith@melbpc.org.au
(03) 9726 9145 AH
(03) 9736 2515 BH
Margaret Brown
(03) 9874 5778
2nd Tuesday,
7.30 – 10.00 pm
Multinet (Gas and Fuel) Theatrette
200 Rooks Rd, Vermont
Melway map 62 H2

East Workshop

Aldo Pitre
aldop@melbpc.org.au
Ken Gubbins
kgubbins@melbpc.org.au
(03) 9898 5478 Ph/Fax
Sunday following the East SIG meeting, 10.30 am
Multinet (Gas and Fuel) Theatrette
200 Rooks Rd, Vermont
Melway map 62 H2

Graphics

Yahya Abdal-Aziz
(03) 9562 1023 AH
(brief calls please)
Asst convener:
Kevin Gorie
3rd Monday, 7.45 pm
We meet in the bungalow at the rear of Nadish Naoroji's home,
8 Park Cres,
North Caulfield

Hardware

Felix Hofmann
felix@melbpc.org.au
(03) 9523 5400 AH
3rd Wednesday, 7.00 pm
Melb PC SIG Room

Music

Yahya Abdal-Aziz
(03) 9562 1023 AH
(brief calls please)
Asst convener:
Eric Best
(03) 9376 1984 AH
2nd Thursday, 7.30 pm
Melb PC SIG Room

New Users, Central

Graham Paul
gp@melbpc.org.au
(03) 9417 5315 AH
3rd Monday, 7.00 pm
Melb PC SIG Room

New Users, East

Doug Brooke
dab@melbpc.org.au
(03) 9822 3458 BH & AH
2nd Tuesday,
7.30 – 10.00 pm
(except January)
St Mark's Anglican Church,
Cnr Canterbury & Burke Rds, Camberwell
Melway map 45 J10

OS/2

John Angelico
talldad@melbpc.org.au
(03) 9544 8792 BH & AH
4th Tuesday,
6.30 – 10.00 pm
Melb PC SIG Room

Programming

Ross Hall
(03) 5428 6470 AH
(03) 9699 4000 BH
Andrew Callaway
acal@ozemail.com.au
(03) 9619 4067 BH
2nd Tuesday, 7.30 pm
Melb PC SIG Room

Quicken

Viv Martin
martinvg@melbpc.org.au
(03) 9583 5372 AH
4th Thursday, 7.00 pm
Melb PC SIG Room

Retired & Interested Persons

Ken Thomas
(03) 9884 5309 BH & AH
4th (*not* last) Friday,
10.00 am
Lutheran Church,
25 Cypress Ave,
Glen Waverley

UNIX

Yahya Abdal-Aziz
(03) 9562 1023 AH
(brief calls please)
3rd Thursday, 7.30 pm
Melb PC SIG Room

Video Editing (Linear)

Albert Vanzet
vanzet@melbpc.org.au
(03) 9439 1768 BH & AH
4th Monday,
7.00 – 9.30 pm
45 Talbot Ave, Balwyn
Melway map 32 E8

Video Editing (Non-linear)

Lawrie Weston
westonl@diamondc.net.au
(03) 9742 3738
2nd Monday,
7.00 – 9.00 pm
45 Talbot Ave, Balwyn
Melway map 32 E8

Waffle

Vince Thornton
018 171 344
Andrew Callaway
acal@ozemail.com.au
(03) 9619 4067 BH
"Eat-ins" after monthly meeting

Warragul

Gordon Ross
gross@tpgi.com.au
1st Friday, 7.30 pm
Warragul Education Centre

Western Suburbs

Robert Mead
meadr@netstra.com.au
(03) 9312 5427
4th Tuesday,
7.00 – 9.00 pm
Sunshine Squash Centre,
cnr Kent and Stewart Sts,
Sunshine

Windows

Lynn Pollock
lynn@melbpc.org.au
(03) 9598 3186 AH
(03) 9533 5002 BH
1st Monday,
7.00 – 9.30 pm
Melb PC SIG Room

Updates and corrections

Please send to

Joe Henry
SIG Co-ordinator:

joehenry@melbpc.org.au

or via the office.

SIG Co-ordinator
Joe Henry

SIG meeting reports

East

» *Margaret Brown*

At our last meeting for 1997, our speaker from Hewlett-Packard showed us that the days of printer, fax, scanner and photocopier all competing for precious desk space should be over.

He demonstrated a recently released model integrating all four functions in one compact unit, a machine that represents the future of his industry.

He also demonstrated a colour model that produced very impressive colour copies. But we were reminded that results depend greatly upon the paper used, and that higher quality comes at a price, about one dollar per page for the samples he presented.

Shareware

Stewart Bedford demonstrated *Associate*, a small shareware program you can use to set file associations in Explorer. We have all experienced the annoying feature of some programs that load and then take over file associations, without the courtesy of asking first. Like many utilities—this one is not essential but very helpful.

Will your machine cope with the transition to the year 2000 (Y2K)? Stewart demonstrated 2000.EXE, a shareware program that claims to determine if your computer is Y2K-compliant. Run from a clean boot to DOS, it checks if your BIOS will automatically roll over to 1 Jan 2000, if the date will have to be manually set each morning after that, or if your system will be of no use at all!

Dave Botherway expanded on the Y2K topic and made the point that we should not underestimate the size of the problem. The possible effects are far broader than most of us realise. Apart from the obvious computer issues, any equipment or machine that relies on an inbuilt microchip security system is at risk of failure. He gave an example of a passenger lift that was programmed to test the probable reaction on the crucial date. The automatic service check responded and estimated that the lift had not been serviced for 99 years and six months. It therefore went to the ground floor, opened the doors and refused to move. The turn of the century presents a major problem that will affect all of us one way or another.

We look forward to 1998 and assure new members of a warm welcome at East.

PC STORAGE SPECIALS

IDE DRIVES

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4.3Gb Quantum S/T	$459.00
6.4Gb Quantum S/T	$587.00

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3.1Gb W. Digital	$358.00
4.3Gb W. Digital	$414.00
6.4Gb W. Digital	$523.00

OTHER MEDIA

Zip Drive - Parallel Port	$265.00
Zip Plus - SCSI & Parallel	$366.00
100Mb Zip Disks - each	$23.50
100Mb Zip Disks - 10 pk	$225.00
Jaz Drive - Internal	$515.00
1Gb Jaz Media - each	$159.00
Sony 4/8Gb DAT Drive	$1427.00
DDS 120M Tape	$35.00
DDS Cleaning Tape	$39.00

Installation is not included.

SCSI DRIVES

IBM

2.1Gb Capricorn	$379.00
4.3Gb Capricorn	$586.00
9.1Gb Scorpion	$1492.00

SEAGATE

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2.2Gb Barracuda Ultra	$726.00
4.5Gb Barracuda Ultra	$1102.00
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SIG and other meeting dates

February

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Note: These (‡) meet at Melb PC (see map below)						1
2 Windows ‡	3	4 Monthly meeting Waffle	5 Assembly & Other Languages ‡ Ballarat	6 Warragul	7	8
9 Access (Database) ‡ Video Editing (Non-linear)	10 Programming ‡ East New Users, East	11 Bendigo Communications ‡	12 Music ‡ Daytime ‡	13	14	15
16 Graphics New Users, Central ‡	17 Committee ‡	18 Hardware ‡	19 UNIX ‡	20 Retired & Interested Persons	21	21
23 C/C++ Programming ‡ Video Editing (Linear)	24 OS/2 ‡ Western Suburbs	25 Clarion	26 Quicken ‡	27	28	

OS/2

» *John Angelico*

Convener John Angelico welcomed five to ten OS/2 users to the meeting. Initial discussion on the release of FixPak 5 indicated that for most users it was very stable. For those without problems, it would probably not be necessary unless they required one of the new features: upgraded CHKDSK.SYS (also available as CHKDSK32.ZIP) and/or REGEDIT2, a Win 95 Registry editor and OS/2 native INI file editor.

John began (after some technical troubles with the data projector) on the CONFIG.SYS file using the freeware utility CFGINFO.ZIP available on the Melb PC BBS in the OS2 Utilities area.

He outlined the following features, giving performance tips and warnings as he went:

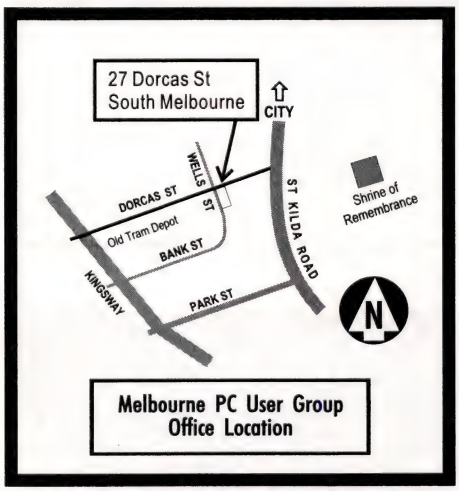
- IFS (Installable File Systems) for the IBM High Performance File System (HPFS) and for CD-ROMs
- Cache settings for the HPFS
- Kill Feature to allow controlled termination of a stalled application from the task list
- PMSeek used in place of the regular Finder in the WarpCenter
- Two ways to set Async_Focus_Change to overcome Desktop application hangs
- FAT file performance features DISKCACHE and BUFFERS
- Time Slicing and the use of MAXWAIT
- Swapper file initial settings and Threads—the heart of OS/2 programming and the smallest unit of processing handled by the OS.

Open forum

We again welcomed newcomers, reported news and took questions and comments. The main news was that IBM has released public FixPak 5 for Warp 4. Initial experience has been excellent and many more people are using Fastkick to apply FixPaks from their hard disks, instead of making floppies (now up to 14!).

MR/2 ICE Internet mail reader

Terry Kemp demonstrated the use of MR/2 as a mail reader. Using his own system, he dialed into his mail server and collected mail. With some mail downloaded and the Internet connection still active, Terry showed some of the extensive features of the program, including its brisk performance. This quickly led to a Netscape show as well, after Terry showed us how to double click on an address to fire up the browser. An active discussion about Netscape and its various options, including proxies, cache, mail features etc. followed. □



‡ *Many SIGs meet at Melb PC's premises, at 27 Dorcas Steet, South Melbourne.*

Peter Smith

Peter's *PC Update* Puzzles

These puzzles can be solved without using a computer—if a bird-brain can write them, another bird-brain can solve them!

Cross-Sum

Each of the clues provided is the sum of the digits of the corresponding answer.

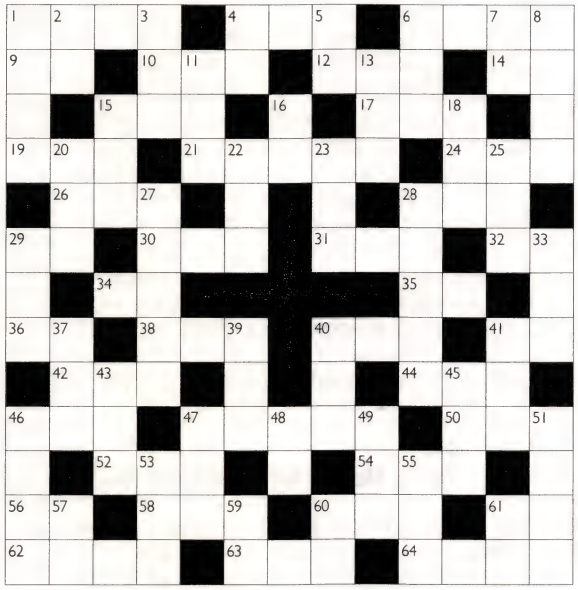
Hints

There are no zeroes used, just the digits 1 – 9.

The answer to 15 across is 281.

Every answer is unique.

Every answer has all its digits different.



Across

1 25	**12** 21	**21** 15	**30** 19	**36** 8	**44** 22	**54** 8	**62** 13
4 7	**14** 5	**24** 7	**31** 21	**38** 7	**46** 17	**56** 5	**63** 7
6 24	**15** 11	**26** 9	**32** 5	**40** 11	**47** 17	**58** 13	**64** 26
9 15	**17** 10	**28** 20	**34** 13	**41** 16	**50** 10	**60** 20	
10 18	**19** 19	**29** 3	**35** 9	**42** 6	**52** 20	**61** 8	

Down

1 12	**6** 7	**15** 14	**23** 21	**33** 11	**43** 17	**49** 9	**59** 4
2 14	**7** 6	**16** 13	**25** 11	**37** 8	**45** 15	**51** 25	**60** 11
3 24	**8** 15	**18** 15	**27** 15	**39** 20	**46** 28	**53** 19	**61** 16
4 7	**11** 9	**20** 11	**28** 15	**40** 20	**47** 6	**55** 8	
5 12	**13** 19	**22** 11	**29** 6	**41** 19	**48** 13	**57** 4	

Cryptotext

This cryptotext contains a remark attributed to former Soviet politician and leader Leonid Brezhnev. The original text was converted using a simple substitution code, that is each occurrence of a particular letter has been replaced with another letter. No letter is replaced by itself.

Y O P Y D N K V F P T G Y O

S D P P P F P J Y G N E X G X ,

L N K E P M P D H E N T T O N

G X R N G E R Y N T G E .

December's answers

Losing with Lotto

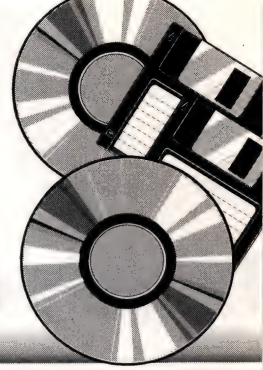
System Size: 15
Numbers: 3, 7, 11, 13, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26, 29, 31, 33, 38, 42

An assorted dozen

1. 69 (69^2 = 4761, 69^3 = 328,509).
2. 9 (September).
3. Bookkeeper / bookkeeping.
4. Today is 1 January, Jack's 16th birthday was yesterday.
5. 102,564.
6. There are 87 possible solutions, from the smallest: $6 \times 21{,}578{,}934 = 129{,}473{,}658$ to the largest: $6 \times 98{,}745{,}231 = 592{,}471{,}386$
7. Bus 9. (The number is the largest submultiple of the sum of the two parts of the time.)
8. What you've never had you never miss.
9. There's none so blind as those that won't see.
10. Nine hundred, ninety thousand.
11. Ninety thousand, nine hundred.
12. Twenty-one thousand.

When I first published this collection of puzzles in *The Age*, only one reader got all twelve correct. So, if one or two got the better of you, don't be too downhearted!

Glenn Webster



Shareware/Freeware library update

Updates

Melb 0000
Melb PC Shareware Catalog V4.2

This disk contains the details of the current disks in the Shareware Library of the Melbourne PC User Group. Each disk is described in the same format that you see here. This format enables us to provide more details of each disk's contents than a single line entry. It also enables you to use a program such as LIST (provided on this disk) to search for a disk or a program, by name, by number, by category, or by content. A new catalog disk will be released quarterly in the months of February, May, August, and November. The new catalog will contain details of all current disks up to the issue of *PC Update* for those months. A number of useful utilities have been included with the disk. The catalog is supplied in a compressed form due to the size of the catalog files. It must be installed on a hard disk before use. All information is accessed by menus.

Melb 1490 LIST v9.3A

LIST is a general purpose file browsing/viewing utility with many features, including a file selection/utility menu, selective printing, a telephone dialer, scrollable windows, and the ability to view files within archives. It is supplied in three versions: Plus (all commands and features), Regular (no file selection menu) and Small (no help screen, requires only 30 KB). Documentation is supplied on the disk. This version adds Win95 long file names to subdirectory names in menu displays and preserves long file names for copy and move operations. LIST is a "must have" utility. Regn US$37 for LIST PLUS and US$99 for LIST ENHANCED.

Melb 2518
Phone Book for Windows v4.6

Phone Book for Windows has been designed to track the phone numbers of clients while you are on the move. It can be used at home or for business and it is excellent for use on a laptop or notebook computer. The program has set fields for information such as name, address, two phone numbers and a fax number. You can add notes and comments about the client also. The program has an unlimited number of possible entries, and all of the records that you enter are automatically sorted. Some of the utilities enable you to search, dial a number via a modem, print, export and import database files from other applications, and much more. A similar format to a regular phone-address book makes the program very easy to use and very intuitive. This version has improved compatibility with new modems. It requires an 80286 or faster processor, Windows 3.1 or later, 2 MB of RAM and 400 KB of hard disk space. Regn US$17.

The order form for disks from the Melb PC Shareware/Freeware library is on page 32 of each issue of *PC Update*

Melb 2519
Daily Notes for Windows v4.4

Daily Notes for Windows is a program similar to Phone Book for Windows, although it is designed to be used for writing notes during meetings or discussions. It is excellent for use on a laptop or notebook computer. This program is very useful if you need to find your notes quickly, and you do not have time to search through piles and piles of hand-written notes on odd-sized pieces of paper. The program also helps you to search these notes by date or subject, or to organise them into date or subject sequence. You can even print them to file away or to distribute to other people. This version has a new date format and support for the year 2000. It requires an 80286 or faster processor, 2 MB of RAM, 400 KB of free hard disk space and Windows 3.X or later. Regn US$15.

Melb 2608
Desktop Themes v1.6 (Win 95)

The Plus! pack for Win 95 adds many additional features to Windows—some things that really should have been included with Win 95 itself. One of these is Desktop Themes. A Theme is a collection of sounds, icons, pointers (cursors), along with wallpaper, colour and font settings and a screensaver. The Desktop Themes application is a direct replacement for the Desktop Themes control panel provided with the Plus! pack. It offers the same functionality as the Plus! version with a few additional features. Even if you have Plus! you might want to consider switching to Desktop Themes for the additional features. This version corrects some problems with later versions of Plus! A list of files (if any) that could not be installed is displayed after you install a theme. You will require VGA or better graphics and Win 95 or later. Regn A$20.

Melb 8155
Rachel's Fashion Dolls v2.6

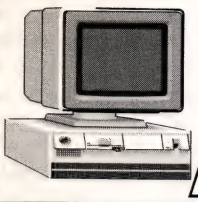
This is a children's paper doll dress-up/colouring program that will appeal to a wide age group. It is easy enough for pre-schoolers to use with a minimum of assistance from adults. Children of all ages will enjoy placing dolls on a background and then dressing them with various clothing outfits. The outfits can be easily changed and the dolls can be removed and replaced as well. Images can be coloured in 48 hues, saved and printed. The dolls' voices are Sound Blaster compatible. This version includes corrections for some minor problems as well as new contact details for the author. Rachel's Fashion Dolls requires an 8086/8088 processor, DOS 3.0 or later, 512 KB of RAM, 1 MB of disk space, VGA graphics and a mouse. A Sound Blaster sound card or a compatible sound card is needed to use the voice feature but it is not essential to use the program. Regn US$20.

Melb 8205 Wordware 97 (Hot Tools for Word for Windows)

Wordware 97 is a collection of 60 macros and seven professionally designed templates for Word for Windows. It provides facilities for managing files, projects, business contacts and people, all inside Word for Windows. It is easy to use and to operate. It has a Personal Information Manager and a full-function CD Player. Many utilities, such as a Smart Quote Slayer, an Auto Correct Toggler and a Smart Paste Toggler, have been included to make common tasks even quicker. The Multimedia Player will play all multimedia files. It even has a quick command line, Windows Exit/Restart/Reboot, Lock Word (for privacy), Close All and Exit, and Print Summary Information. You can use WinFax Macros that take full advantage of WinFax Pro. Wordware 97 supports a smart document interface. This version has been updated with extra features to support Word 97 or better in a Win 95 or better environment. It requires an 80486 (or faster) processor, Win 95, Word for Windows, 8 MB of RAM and 1 MB of hard disk space. This package will not work with Windows 3.x. Regn US$40.

Melb 8349 CatDisk v9.20

CatDisk is a friendly, powerful program that maintains a library of files in your disk collection. It supports all major archive file formats. It automatically examines the contents of archive files and adds to the catalog all file names within the archive and gives you the opportunity to add a 43-character comment to each entry. Registration provides access to a number of built-in utilities, such as DISKFILL and DUPCLEAN



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Sunday 8th February
Choice of two Swap Meets
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1022 Whitehorse Rd, Box Hill
or
COLLINGWOOD TOWN HALL
140 Hoddle St, Collingwood

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DISKFILL automates and optimises off-loading files to floppies and catalogs them. DUPCLEAN cleans up any duplicate or redundant files. An extensive on-disk user guide can be printed (152 pages). This version can process multi-disk ARJ archives and self-extracting ARJ archives. In addition to running the PKUNZIP utility to extract FILE_ID.DIZ comments from ZIP files, CATDISK can now, optionally, accomplish the task using its own code, which can be much faster. This disk includes a standard version and a DPMI-compliant version. The standard version requires an 8088 or faster processor, DOS 3.0 or later and 320 KB of free RAM. The DPMI-compliant version requires an 80286 or faster processor with 640 KB of base RAM and 512 KB extended RAM, running DOS 3.0 or later with HIMEM.SYS, 386MAX or QEMM386. Regn US$29.

Melb 8520 Bike Pro for Windows v3.0C

BikePro is a Performance Optimiser for the serious cyclist. The program is capable of recording the details of riders with training logs, diet logs and food glossaries. It has many reports, graphs and other features. This version includes new reports and some bug fixes. BikePro requires Microsoft Windows 3.1 or later and VBRUN300.DLL, which is not on this disk. (It is available on disk Melb 8052). Regn US$10.

Melb 8526 Internet Book for Windows v4.90

Internet Book for Windows is designed to help you store and easily retrieve all of your information about the Internet in one place. You can catalog World Wide Web pages, Gophers, Archie Servers, FTP Sites, E-Mail Addresses, and News Groups. Whether you are an experienced Internet user or just a beginner Internet Book is easy to learn and to use. It supports all web browsers. This version has a new date format and support for the year 2000. It requires an 80286 or later processor, Windows 3.x or later and 2 MB of RAM. Regn US$15 (single user).

Melb 8567 Awave v4.3

Awave is an audio and wavetable instrument file format converter, editor and player. It converts files between more than 100 file formats and it can read the instrument formats of most commercial synthesisers and sound cards. It presents the instruments contained in a file as a graphical hierarchy with the "bank" item at the top, the "instruments" as branches and, finally, the "waveforms" as leaves. If you have one of the supported wavetable synthesis sound cards you can just click on an item, and directly play it on a MIDI keyboard. If you have just a basic sound card capable of digital audio playback, you can still play any item by using the built in Audio Player feature. There's also a simple command line interface which enables you to use the Audio Player to play the sounds in any of the supported file formats, so it is also ideal for use as a "helper" for your WWW browser. You can use Awave as a generic instrument editor for your wavetable sound card. For some cards this is the only one available! If you are into in any form of sampled audio on the Windows platform, you'll most likely find this program useful. This update includes support for additional twelve file formats. It requires Win 95 or later (or Windows 3.1 with Win32s 1.3), a mouse and any Windows-supported sound card. AWE32, Midi input, Advanced Gravis Ultrasound and Turtle Beach WaveFront cards and DirectX are optional. Regn US$48.

Melb 8575 Ecopad32 Text Editor v4.10

Ecopad32 is a text editor replacement for Windows Notepad. It can load and print files of up to 32 MB in size. You can select 1,2,3,4, or 8 pages per sheet. You can do double sided printing and one or two sided booklets! Save trees & paper costs with Ecopad32! It is excellent for printing source code listings or long text files. Ecopad is compatible with all True Type fonts/point sizes and supports any printer that can be used with Win 95 or Windows NT 3.51. This version is a fully functional trial version with many new features, such as user configurable tools, more tab options, line numbers, page breaks, savable printing configurations, support for the multiple document interface, custom date and time formats and new printer escape codes. It requires an 80386 or faster processor, Win 95, 4 MB of RAM and 2 MB of hard disk space. Regn US$27.

Melb 8585 Wintune 97 v1.0

Wintune 97 is a system analyser that runs under Win 95 or Win NT. The program will analyse the CPU, video, disk, memory and applications which are installed in your system, then advise the best way to improve the performance of your system. This is done by presenting a report and comparing the results to other manufacturers' machines. This version takes into account the latest changes in Win95. It requires Win 95/NT.

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Melb 8653
4NT v3.00B (32-bit FOR Win 95/NT)

4NT from JP Software brings the power and convenience of the popular 4DOS and 4OS2 programs to users of the Windows NT operating system. It is a command interpreter or "shell" that displays a C:\ prompt, waits for you to type something, and then reacts to your commands. It replaces the default command interpreter (CMD.EXE) that is supplied with Windows NT. Whether you are a computer novice or an experienced user, 4NT will help you to get the most out of your Windows NT system. It is a complete Windows NT application, and not simply a version of 4DOS running under Windows NT's DOS capabilities. You don't have to change your computing habits or unlearn anything to use it. If you know how to display a directory, copy a file, or start an application program, you already know how to use 4NT. If you are not used to using the command line, you'll appreciate the program's comprehensive online help and the way it makes the command prompt so straightforward and easy to use. 4NT understands all of the commands you may already know and adds to them. This version offers command enhancements, over 50 new commands, dozens of powerful batch file features, and many other unique command line tools. 4NT runs on Intel-compatible CPUs and you can use it with Windows NT 3.5, 3.51, 4.0, and above. Regn US$70.

Melb 8682
NoteBook for Win 95 v5.1

NoteBook is a large file text editor for Win 95. This replacement for Notepad has the ability to open large files of over 4 MB, and supports drag and drop editing, overtype mode, and full font control. It contains a handy toolbar to store the most used tools. Edited work may be saved and printed. This version corrects minor errors which might have caused problems on some computers. It requires Win 95 or later, Visual Basic 5 runtime files and a mouse. Regn US$15.

Melb 8731
Oracle of Runes for Windows v1.1A

Runes is a true brain twister for those who love solving logic puzzles. You play the character of Marcus Flavius, a Roman scholar who has been sent by the Senate of Rome to discover the secret of the Oracle of Runes. Marcus's task is to reach the doorway in each puzzle by strategically stacking the marble blocks that are strewn about each room. This shareware version of Runes contains puzzles A —J and gives you the solutions to the first 3 puzzles. The registered version contains puzzles A— Z and gives you the solutions to all of them. Oracle of Runes requires an 80486-66 or faster processor, Windows 3.x/95 or later and 4 MB of RAM free. Regn US$18.

Melb 8744
CompuShow for Windows v3.00A

CompuShow for Windows is a graphic viewer, printer, converter, catalog and explorer for GIF, JPEG, PNG, BMP, PCX, IFF/LMB/HAM, Targa, etc, image files. It also displays text files and decodes UUencoded, XXencoded, and MIME encoded (Internet EMail) files. By simply checking file types (such as GIF, JPG, AVI, MOV, etc.) CompuShow sets itself up as an associated viewer for File Manager/Explorer so that double-clicking the file (or dragging it to the CompuShow window or icon) displays it. Parental Controls keep children from erasing or renaming files and prevent their viewing files not intended for younger eyes. File conversion functions include "save as wallpaper" and setting the background and transparent colours of GIF files (for images on Web pages). View Lists (scripted slide shows) may include pictures, music and sounds from different disk drives and directories and may be run either with a timed delay between images or in manual (presentation) mode, enabling you to move forward and backward through the script. The Image Gallery is a fully-featured image "thumbnail" database, to catalog all picture files on your hard disk (floppies, CDs, etc), classify them and assign descriptive keywords. This version includes "tree view", a thumbnail-based "explorer" which immediately displays thumbnail images as you open any folder, while double-clicking a thumbnail displays the picture full-size. It requires Windows 3.1 or later, 4 MB of RAM and a mouse. A sound card is required to play multimedia files. Regn US$35.

Melb 8749
Crossword Compiler for Win 95 v4.1

Crossword Compiler will help you to create, to edit and to desktop-publish crossword puzzles. It can fill in blank grids, search for words matching a pattern, find anagrams, write clues, printout and copy to the clipboard. Crossword Compiler is used by many of the world's best puzzle constructors but it is also simple to use. The program is fully explained in the Help file which can be accessed at any time to view the relevant help topic. This version includes the Vocabulary Fill feature—just type in some words and the program will automatically build them into a freeform crossword. Some features have been disabled in this evaluation version, and the puzzle size has been restricted to a 10x10 grid. Crossword Compiler requires an 80486 or faster processor running MS Win 95. Regn US$45.

Melb 8771
CurveExpert v1.34

CurveExpert is a comprehensive curve fitting system for Windows. XY data can be modeled using a toolbox of fitting techniques which includes linear and nonlinear regression and many types of interpolation/spline fitting. Over 35 models are built-in, but custom regression models may be defined by the user. The process of finding the best fit can be automated by letting CurveExpert compare your data to each model to choose the best curve. The program will handle an unlimited number of data points. It was designed to be simple but powerful, so that all users can obtain a model for their data quickly and easily. Documentation is provided in the form of a Windows help file. This update contains corrections to the keyboard interface and fixes plots with a log x axis (which were not plotting correctly). This 16-bit version of CurveExpert is Win 95 compatible. It needs about 2 MB of disk space and it will run on any computer supporting Windows, although a fast 486 or Pentium-based computer is strongly recommended. Plots can be printed on any printer supported by Windows. Regn US$35.

Melb 8778
Financial Freedom: Cards and Labels v2.30

Cards and Labels is a Windows application for printing business cards and labels. It features a drag and drop interface and it can use all of your existing fonts and bitmap images. The program also includes a database engine to connect to any dbase-compatible file or you can create your own! You can place text, pictures, lines and rectangles anywhere on your layout and then print in colour or black and white. Requires an 80386 processor with Windows 3.1 or later, 2 MB of RAM and 900 KB of hard disk space. This version has been released as Freeware.

Melb 8800-8801
Everything I Own! v1.7 (2-disk set)

Everything I Own! is a Household Inventory Program for Win 95. It can be used to keep track of every item in your home or collection. Your data can be filtered and sorted before being displayed on the screen or being printed in one of the many reports available. Everything I Own! has a very handy "Backup to Floppy" and "Restore" facility. The program is very easy to learn and to use. In the event of theft or disaster, "Everything I Own!" could become the most important program on your computer. This assumes that you have a current backup of both the program and the data files kept at a location outside your home. This version corrects an installation problem that occurred on some computers. The program requires an 80486 or faster processor, Win 95, 8 MB of RAM and 6 MB of hard disk space. The registration fee (US$25) will grant a lifetime usage license for one copy of the program for use on any one computer at any one time.

Melb 8804
TextPad v3.0 (32-bit)

TextPad is designed to provide the power and functionality to satisfy the most demanding text editing requirements. There is no limit on the file size that may be edited. This 32-bit edition can edit files up to the limits of virtual memory. This is explained in more detail in the on-line help documentation. This is a major update of TextPad. The program can have multiple personalities for compatibility with various applications, customisable keystroke shortcuts,

a clip library for inserting frequently used text (such as HTML tags), and new commands and menus. You can have up to 64 user macros and 32 user tools. Control characters can be typed and their decimal code can be displayed. Some new shortcuts have been defined, and some default shortcuts have been deleted. TextPad requires an 80486SX or faster processor, 4 MB of RAM (12 MB for NT), 2.5 MB of free disk space and either Windows 3.1x (with Win32s 1.30.172 extensions), or Win 95/NT 3.51. Regn US$27 to US$35.

Melb 8875 WinSafe 95 v4.0

WinSafe 95 saves all vital information and restores your Win 95 system back to operating condition when you find yourself in Safe Mode or a crash. It gives you quick access to all the files and utilities that you need to recover. It restores your registry and other vital files in a second. You can even recover from the DOS prompt (if you get locked out of Windows) by simply typing the word "WINSAFE". WinSafe95 comes with all the tools and information needed to restore. It is easier to use than Microsoft's Error Recovery Utility. WinSafe95 informs you when your system files change and you need to backup. It can even reinstall Win 95 from the DOS prompt using your cabinet files. This is a must for Win 95 users especially if you do not know how to restore hidden files, registry file, boot files and files with attributes. This program does it all and walks you through finding your problem. This version has many new features on the interface, such as free disk space hardware diagnostic, many new DOS commands, auto Registry backup, new boot options and a virus scanner. It requires an 80486 or later processor, 4 MB of RAM, 3.5 MB of hard disk space and Win 95. Registered users can obtain free tech support if they crash! Regn US$25.

Melb 8901-8902 (2-disk set) Right Resume for Windows v3.05

The Right Resume is a powerful Windows-based job hunting package that provides you with all the necessary tools to help you to get the job you want. You can create your choice of a chronological, functional, or targeted resume which may be further enhanced using a built-in WYSIWYG word processor (with mail merge). You can store information for up to ten employers or different job targets, and then select which items to include in your resume. This feature enables you to generate different resumes very easily and quickly from one data source without having to retype any information. The program includes a Power Words list from which you can copy and paste selected words into your resume to give it the impact it deserves. An on-disk user's manual, a complete on-line help system and sample resumes are included also. Registration provides a printed user's manual, a 50,000+ word spell checker, a contact manager database, a calendar (for scheduling interviews, appointments, reminders, etc.) and other features. This version corrects some minor bugs. The Right Resume for Windows requires an 80386 or later processor, Windows 3.1x/95, VGA graphics and 4 MB of hard disk space. Regn US$30.

Melb 8944 TalkScribe for Windows v1.02

TalkScribe is a Windows software package for transcribing the spoken word into computer text files. It is not voice recognition software. Instead, it provides sound file playback to facilitate the typing of information into a computer while a typist manipulates and listens to the sound file playback, much like using a dictation transcribing machine. TalkScribe consists of a sound file player (to play sound (.WAV) files containing spoken words), and a text editor (to type text into your computer as you listen to the sound file). The program uses special keystrokes to start, stop, and backspace sound playback as you type—your hands need not leave the keyboard. Other features include Windows-style file operations and text entry/editing, user-changeable special keystroke assignments and extensive on-line help. Sound file playback is limited to files of no more than three minutes playing time in this evaluation copy of the program. This version has been released to correct some problems experienced under Windows 3.1x. TalkScribe requires an 80386 processor, Windows 3.x/95 and 5 MB of hard disk space. A multi-media sound card and sound recording software are also required. Regn from US$29 (single user).

Melb 9005-9006 Math Flight v1.2 (2-disk set)

Math Flight enables children to practice basic arithmetic with activities that include Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division, a mix of Addition/Subtraction, Multiplication/Division or a combination of all four. You can use and print out arithmetic operation tables. Seven difficulty levels are included for customisability. You can focus the questions on a specific number. It also includes a Hall of Fame to keep track of good scores on tests. This version has two additional games to test arithmetical abilities. It requires an 80386 or faster processor, Win 95 or later, 2 MB of RAM, 1.6 MB of hard disk space and a VGA or better video card and monitor. A sound card is optional. Regn US$10.

Melb 9014-9016 (3-disk set) MIDInight Express II v2.0

MIDInight Express is a real-time, emulated wavetable MIDI jukebox and renderer. It will run with any sound card (correctly installed under Win 95) capable of playing 16-bit stereo, 22050 Hz digital audio. No hardware wavetable support is required—even the simple sound circuits found on most laptops will do. While MIDInight Express is designed to work alongside WAVmaker for Win 95/NT, it can also run as a standalone player, and a simple renderer. It can copy its output to a WAV file for quick and dirty MID to WAV rendering. This version has an improved sound engine which supports the extended PRG (patch) format introduced with the Mellosoftron II live virtual sampler. This enables you to take full advantage of the Mellosoftron's patch editing capabilities for the creation of your own unique MIDI instruments. You can still use WAVmaker's GMega Sound Library or the Compact GM Library. This version also sports a new, CD player-like user interface. It requires a 80386 processor (80486 or better is recommended), Win 95 or later, a 16-bit sound card supporting playback at a minimum of 22,050 Hz and 1 MB of hard disk space. MIDInight Express is Freeware. This disk has been re-issued as a three disk set due to an increase in size. Consequently, disk Melb 8679 has been deleted.

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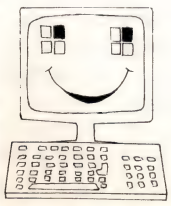

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New disks

Melb 9017-9018 Barking Cards 96 Lite v1.1: Valentines Day (2-disk set)

This Valentines Day is a Windows 95 animated greeting card application with a romantic greeting. It features high quality, full screen animation and sound. You can personalise the card by adding your own text, images, photos and clip art. You can also add pre-recorded sounds and voice messages to the card. The card is saved as a self-executing file that you can then send to your recipient by attaching it to an email or by saving it to diskette and sending the diskette. The self-playing card will run on any MS Windows 3.1/95 system with the following minimum requirements: 80486DX processor, 8 MB of RAM, 5 MB of disk space, VGA graphics and a sound card (if you want them to hear the sounds). Regn US$8.

Melb 9019 TweakEzy System Time Correction v1.00

TweakEzy is a tiny, yet very handy, Win 95 utility for correcting the system time. It is ideal for anyone in charge of one or more PCs who cannot be bothered with setting up Internet-based time synchronisation to keep the system clock(s) from drifting. It does not require Internet access. It is suitable for correcting time drifts of more than one minute per week. Both clocks and date/time stamps, will stay accurate to within seconds. TweakEzy should appeal to holders of the "the smaller the better" philosophy. This program works, and it is truly tiny by today's standards. It requires an 80386 or faster processor with Win 95, 4 MB of RAM and 2 MB of hard disk space. Regn from US$10.

Melb 9020 Contact Book for Windows v4.4

Contact Book for Windows helps you to keep track of all kinds of personal and business contacts. It can be used at home or for business and it is excellent for use on a laptop or notebook computer. Contact Book consists of two programs: Contact Book and Note Book. The programs have an unlimited number of possible entries, and all of the records that you enter are sorted automatically. You can search, dial a number via a modem, print records, letters, envelopes and notes. A similar format to a regular book make the programs very easy to use. This version of the program uses a new date format suitable for the year 2000. Contact Book requires an 80286 or faster processor, DOS 3.0 or later, 2 MB of RAM and 400 KB of hard disk space. Regn US$22.

Melb 9021 The Family Files (Home Information Manager) v1.1

The Family Files is a simple manager for family information. It tries to to make your life easier by providing a ready reference for various family items, from birthstones to burial plots, from blood types to clothing sizes. You can store basic data on insurance, credit cards, cars, subscriptions, plumbers, doctors, clubs, and many other things. A contact page called People Finder is a ready reference of phone numbers and addresses for all family members. There is space to store information about the person's "Hang Outs" such as friends' houses, second jobs or favourite after-hours haunts. A Doctors' page stores information about six doctors and enables you to draw lines between patients and doctors. The Document Finder feature reminds you where you have placed your important documents. Sample pages containing demonstration data (available through the context-sensitive, online help) have been designed to provide ideas about the kind of useful information you can store. The active pages in this shareware version are HOME, People Finder, Doctors, Medical History, The Best Fit and Life of the Soul. All pages are active in the registered version. The Family Files requires at least an 80486 processor, Windows 3.x, 8 MB of RAM and 1.5 MB of disk space. Regn US$25.

Melb 9022-9023 (2-disk set) Membership Librarian 97 v1.5

Membership Librarian 97 is a powerful club/association management program. It is designed to let you keep track of your members by tracking names and addresses, phone numbers, email addresses and other details. You can easily create groups of club members, print reports, mailing labels and form letters, track monetary contributions (initiation fees, periodic fees and special payments) and print member statements. Member lists can be sorted by name, postal code or member type. You can define custom label sizes and print labels for any subset of club members. You can print mail-merge form letters for all (or a subset of) members and automatically print a corresponding set of mailing labels. Member details may be imported and exported as dBase and ASCII files. The program includes a backup and restore module to safeguard your data. Membership Librarian 97 requires MS Win 95 or later. Regn US$70.

Melb 9024 Letterhead Kit-32 for WordPerfect for Win 95 v7.1

The Letterhead Kit is a Business Correspondence Assistant for use with Corel WordPerfect 7.0 (and later) for Win 95. You can use it to customise and retrieve letterheads, fax cover sheets, forms and templates on-the-fly, create label and business card pages, and even add scanned signatures to your correspondence. You can add any of the 30 supplied message graphics for cargo, office and financial information, including "Confidential", "Rush" and "Thank you for your payment" to any of your documents. It requires an 80386 or faster processor, Win 95 or later, 8 MB of RAM and 700 KB of hard disk space. You will also need Corel WordPerfect 8 or 7, 32-bit editions for Win 95/NT. Regn US$20. Disk Melb 2520 contains a 16-bit version of this program for use with WordPerfect 6.0 and Windows 3.1x. Disk Melb 9024 contains a 32-bit version of this program for use with WordPerfect 8 or 7 and Windows 95/NT.

Melb 9025 PKZIP for Windows v2.50 (16-bit and 32-bit)

PKZIP for Windows is a version of the popular archiving utility that works in the native Windows environment. This disk contains both a 16-bit and a 32-bit version of the program. Both versions share many features, such as Windows self-extracting archives, disk spanning (on removable media) for large archived files and self-extracting spanned files. PKZIP for Windows can be forced to store standard MS-DOS 8.3 filenames so that Win 95/NT users can create .ZIP files that will be compatible with users running Windows 3.1x. But it can also retain and restore Win 95/NT Long File Names. You can quickly and easily copy or move files between different .ZIP archives (without having to extract and recompress the individual files), convert .ZIP archives to and from several .ZIP file types, and you can add, edit and view .ZIP comments. Regn US$49 for each program.

Melb 9026 Safety Net v3.6 (16-bit) Melb 9027 Safety Net Pro v6.1 (32-bit)

Safety Net and Safety Net Pro are utilities for backing up key files. They have one default setting (to backup key "Windows" and system files) and five user-configurable options. Safety Net could easily backup all of your .DOC and/or database files, for example. An added feature enables you to archive the files to disk as .ZIP files. Safety Net can print your directory tree. Regn US$22 for each program.

Melb 9028 V (Win 32 File Viewer) v1.2

V is a combination File Viewer and Directory Browser for Win 95/NT. It is similar to LIST for DOS. V is fast and compact. It can view files of unlimited size quickly, and it excels at viewing files in hex format. You can search for a sequence of hex bytes rather than just a text string. Files can be viewed in EBCDIC as well as ASCII and they can be sent easily as email attachments. V has the ability to highlight and copy *columns* of data. It has extensive printing support. Headers/Footers can be customised and the listing can be printed with or without line numbers. Files can also be printed in 2-up Mode, that is, 2 pages per sheet of paper in landscape mode. V has an easy to use interface which takes full advantage of keyboard shortcuts and right-click menus. There is no "File Open Dialog Box". V requires an Intel-based PC with Win 95/NT. Regn US$20 or A$25. □

Tom Coleman

700 days to Y2K...

Here we are at the dawning of the age of Aquarius. PCs are about to enter the new century. All kinds of "bind moggling" whizz-bangery. The optimists among us see a new age, where computers take over all those tasks that we used to do. Today we can see the signs of greater things to come. Already computers lose files without any user input. Once upon a time I could only do that by mistake.

However, the fundamentals of computing, like the laws of physics, do not change. For example, the vast majority of users can easily fit all their essential software on a 1 GB hard disk. In fact most of them can fit it on a hard disk half that size. However, hard disks keep getting bigger. In order to fill this ever-increasing junk room, the software writers write fatter and fatter programs. Remember that *Coleman's Law of Hard Disks* still prevails: "All hard disks are the same size regardless of their capacity, because they are all nearly full and have the same amount of usable free space." For this to remain true in this age of expanding hard disks you need more junk and fatter files. It's bigger than both of us. We might as well submit.

Only the pessimists and, it seems, most journalists, still believe in the Millennium Bug. At least as far as PCs are concerned. Most of the PCs that have been sold in the past two years are Y2K-compliant. Some of the earlier ones may or may not be. Considering that the computer that you buy today is going to be obsolete junk in three years, if you have a problem in the year AD 2000 you will not get much sympathy. What else do you expect from a clunky old Pentium 200?

Mind you, the Millennium Bug is a terrifying reality for mainframe systems. Many of them are running 30-year-old software that has been randomly patched and modified by various programmers, and worse still, half of the original COBOL source code no longer exists. Someone lost it. They have *big* problems. PCs don't have problems, but you might have some if you choose to fly, bank money, get insured, forward freight or generally do business with a mainframe after the year 2000. Your pension, unemployment benefit and medical benefits are included. They are all on mainframe computers.

Getting all the mainframers to solve their problems before the end of the 20th century is like asking industry to stop emitting CO_2. The reality is that it won't happen. They will find it easier to patch up the damage as it occurs. Higher sea walls, relocate farms, higher refugee status for Pacific Islanders whose homes are below sea level and so on...

Just as you should be shedding your South Pacific real estate holdings, so you should be getting out of any dealings with companies that you do not *know* are Y2K-proof. You realise that the oil companies use mainframes. Buy a push bike. Save the Pacific Islands. It helps not to fart, too.

One way to avoid a problem is to give it to some-one else. Computer salesmen do that by offering Manufacturer's Warranty. You do not pay the manufacturer. You pay the salesman. The warranty is his problem. The rest of it is waffle to avoid having to deal with you personally. So it is with CO_2 emissions and the Millennium Bug.

If every country in the world was to ignore Kyoto and carry on regardless, the average global temperature would rise by 1.6 degrees Celsius by 2050. On the other hand if we were all to cut back to 1990 levels now, the temperature in 2050 would have risen by 1.4 degrees. And if Australia were to totally cease all CO_2 production now and for ever, it would make no significant difference globally by 2050.

However it would relieve some local smog.

In other words we are going to have to go into damage control mode anyway. Regardless of how good and green we are, we have a problem. Getting your knickers in a knot over the Millennium Bug is a waste of energy. As a PC owner you don't really have a problem unless you are running some obscure 25-year-old bit of purpose-built software. Then you and your software may have a problem, but your PC won't have one. That does not mean that you are not going to get caught up in other people's problems.

It may be too hard and too expensive for some mainframers to fix their Millennium Bugs; simply going into damage control after the event may be a more attractive option for them. Particularly if the Board of Directors is not very computer literate, or is even intimidated by computers.

On the other hand the Millennium Bug might be like the Michelangelo Virus.

Remember? □

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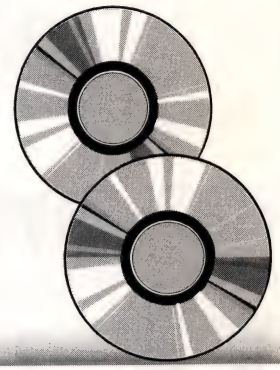
TUTORIAL

Peter Stanski



A brief history of CDs—from DA to DVD

In 1980 Sony and Philips set the standard for the digital audio (DA) compact disc format. In 1982, the first Sony CD player called the CD-101 was released with Billy Joel's *52nd Street* being the first musical production. With the success of CDs the first portable car players became available in 1984. Then, in 1985, the automatic CD changer with a carousel appeared on the market. In the 1990s, the industry began to adopt various storage standards to unify the plethora of hybrid CD formats perfected by third-party developers. These commonly agreed-upon formats were published in a set of coloured-cover books, becoming commonly known by their de facto names as the coloured- book standards. Today many formats are available for various applications such as computer data storage (CD-ROM), imaging (PhotoCD), interactive multimedia (CDi), multi-session data and audio (mixed mode 1 & 2), with the most common of these being the digital audio (DA) format.

New appearances

In the last two years some new technology has begun to make waves in the CD industry. The first was the announcement of the CD-Erasable media in 1995. Erasable CDs were not marketed with a great deal of effort, which has resulted in very few people knowing about the technology. Since 1995, erasable media has gradually filtered into the consumer market allowing CD-Recorder (CD-R) units to re-use mastered CDs—provided erasable media was used. Prior to erasable media, developers and home users could not re-use badly recorded CDs. These often ended up as office frisbees, coffee coasters and eventually in bins. With erasable media, the CD can be re-used allowing new versions of data to be re-written onto the CD. The down side is their 1000 percent higher price tag than conventional CD media. Despite this, erasable CDs have been hastily accepted by in-house document publishers and multimedia developers.

DVD technology

In 1995, work on standardising the emerging Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) had begun. The final standard made public in late 1996 has now settled the heated discussions on what the final format would look like. There were talks of double-sided CDs and some speculation on single-sided double-density formats. Well the vote is in, and the format as listed by Sony is a single-sided dual-layer disc. Despite this, there is still talk of extending this to double-sided media by Hitachi.

This means that DVD reading mechanisms will still maintain backward compatibility with existing CD technology. The new media format has the same dimensions both for diameter (120 mm) and thickness (1.2 mm). However, the CD mechanisms boast faster transfer speeds (10 megabits/sec) and will carry variable speed video, audio and sub-titles (see box for more specifications). Perhaps the greatest achievement by DVD developers lies in the capacity to store entire feature films on one single CD. Those familiar with current technology often find that they have to insert the second disc after the first hour. DVD manages to store whole films and lets the viewers enjoy uninterrupted viewing. This had to be done by providing more storage capacity on the media. The DVD format stores 12 times more data than a conventional CD. This allows for a storage capacity of 4.7 GB for single-layer discs or a total of 8.5 GB for dual-layer discs.

DVD storage format

Since the size has not changed and capacity has increased, the developers had to find a way to pack more information on the same amount of CD real estate. The way that information is encoded on a CD is through small pits located along a data track. You can think of it as a road with pot holes in it. The holes indicate 1s and 0s, which make up the basic building blocks of data. In the case of DVD, information is encoded within the tracks, which have been increased in number per layer. This translates to having a footpath instead of a road, on which you encode your data. Since roads are wider than footpaths, by having more footpaths (tracks) than roads, you effectively increase the storage capacity of the media without increasing the size.

Smaller inter-track spacing requires much finer Numerical Aperture (NA) lens to read the smaller pits, and a much finer laser focus control. Conventional CD-ROM drives use a laser that emits infrared light at wavelength of 780 nanometers (nm), while DVD uses red light at 650 to 635 nm. Shorter wavelengths allow for a narrower laser beam to reflect off the pits within tightly spaced tracks. These improvements in CD encoding and laser optics have made DVD a reality.

Digital video and audio

To provide full-frame video at 167 megabits per second, the DVD would only store about four minutes on a single-layer CD. Therefore, this implies that some sort of video compression is required to store an entire film. The MPEG2 video/audio compression standard has been around for a number of years. Standardised by the Motion Picture Expert Group (MPEG) it is used to encode films on DVDs.

On a single-layer DVD over two hours can be stored (approx. 133 min). On average, 4.9 megabits are required for one second of video and audio. The standard allows for 5.1-channel digital (Dolby AC-3) sound in three languages with additional sub-titles in four languages. The Dolby AC-3 channels are discrete individual audio channels dedicated for each speaker (front left and right, rear left and right, centre and 0.1 for the sub-woofer). Home theatre

The new generation of DVD has up to 12 times the storage of conventional CD media

enthusiasts will especially be pleased to have AC-3 for true cinema-like surround sound. Additionally, for international movie distribution, by falling back to 16-bit linear Dolby Pro Logic encoding (still CD quality), producers have the capability to encode up to eight language audio tracks with 32 sets of sub-titles. This makes DVD a truly digital and international movie format.

Additional extensions to DVD films include user selectable camera views along with a viewer rating system. The possibility for viewing the one film from several camera angles opens up a whole new dimension in entertainment. Viewers will be able to change between several available angles and have the facility for zoom in and out of screen regions. With super-still and flicker-free pausing, these facilities will bring production quality entertainment to the home user.

The parent lock option for setting viewer rating means that children can view a modified version of an adult film. This feature will set the playback of selected titles into child or adult modes complying with the PG, AO and R classifications. It is important to realise that some of these features may not be available on all films, as they need to be specially encoded. Also, features such as zooming and scrolling, or displaying of picture-in-picture (PIP), are specific to the brand and quality of the DVD player.

DVD-ROM

Besides storing full length feature films, DVD technology may be used to store computer data. This would be ideal for multimedia presentations and games that are already appearing on multiple CDs. Those wishing to archive onto DVD-ROMs may have to wait for some time as Hitachi and Toshiba seem to be the only manufacturers. Also to add to the terminology, the name given to DVD-ROM re-writable is DVD-RAM.

The final procedure on burning your own DVD-RAMs seems a little shaky right now. This is to do with how exactly the CD-Writer should record the information onto a DVD disc. The DVD-RAM recording process as proposed by Panasonic and Toshiba, involves recording by landing and grooving on the media and encoding a double spiral. This technique is said to be space-efficient but may be error prone due to variations of beam accuracy. On the other hand, Sony and Philips suggest that burning should be done along a special guide groove which is more reliable but less efficient.

With re-writable DVD-RAM technology, it may be possible to replace your home VCR with a DVD recorder. This means that video tapes which start losing quality while sitting on your bookshelf for a few years could be replaced with DVD-RAM discs. This would significantly increase the life span of your favorite films. Digital video may seem like a

DVD specifications as listed by Sony

	D	DVD
Disc diameter	120 mm	120 mm
Disc thickness	1.2 mm	1.2 mm
Disc structure	Single substrate	Two bonded subtrates (0.6 mm each)
Laser wavelength	780 nm (infrared)	650 to 635 nm (red)
Data layers	1	1 or 2
Data capacity	680 MB (approx)	4.7 GB (single layer) or 8.5 GB (dual layer)
Video rate	1.44 Mbps/sec	1 to 10 Mbps/sec
Video compression	MPEG1	MPEG2
Sound support	2 Channel	2 Channel (PCM) or 2 Channel/5.1-channel or AC-3 with up to 8 streams of data
Subtitles	Open Caption	Up to 32 languages

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radical jump for most domestic users because completely new hardware needs to be purchased. The down side is that this technology may not be available before the year 2000.

From DVD to Divx

With the advent of DVD, Paramount, Universal, Disney and DreamWorks are going to provide DVD feature films at the cost of $5 per disc. Wait for it, there is a catch. After you buy the disc you will be able to watch it for 48 hours. After that time, your DVD player will not play the disc unless you unlock it by paying for another viewing of it. How exactly will you do that?

The DVD player you use has to be a Divx (Digital Video Express) compliant DVD player. Normal DVD players will not be able to play those titles as they will not be the same format. Divx players will have a built-in modem that will dial up the Divx server and charge your credit card. This slowly begins to look like a sophisticated video library. No-one is sure if this is likely to take off, as people with DVD players face an abrupt upgrade to a Divx player. This is likely to affect the acceptance rate and make the overall success of Divx players a questionable venture. Somehow this begins to feel like yet another VHS versus Beta fiasco.

Direct Stream Digital (DSD)

The move to super storage technology has yet another spin-off proposal. Sony and Philips have suggested the Direct Stream Digital (DSD) disc as a "super audio CD". The super CD format is going to support the older CD format to maintain compatibility with the existing CD players. These hybrid DSD discs will be usable in all current players and will contain additional tracks on the extra storage layer. In order for DSD to become successful, backward compatibility plays an essential role. This will allow for gradual migration to new technology and provide additional incentives for consumers. Those with conventional CD players will not get the full benefits of DSD but will be able to partially use them. So far, DSD is just a proposal, but Sony and Philips already have prototype systems that they are using to generate interest in the music industry. These may quickly become a reality since Sony Music is also a music label.

Copy protection

Film piracy has always cost the movie industry a fortune in lost revenue. To fight the number of pirates, the DVD feature films are likely to be protected with the Macrovision copy protection scheme. Macrovision has already been used on commercial video tapes which have been on the market for the several years. This should stop people from being able to copy master DVD titles onto video tapes. Macrovision does not affect the image displayed on television but the recording with a VCR yields a poor and degraded picture. This does not always do such a good job as some recorders are only marginally affected.

To fight digital-to-digital copying, Intel, Microsoft and Matsushita have proposed the scrambling of I-Frames, which are key frames used in digital video. How exactly this is done is not public for various reasons, but may have something to do with how fast a desktop computer can process scrambled I-frames. This is perhaps how Microsoft and Intel have managed to get involved. They originally devised the concept and Matsushita are putting their technology into DVD hardware.

Another piracy protection system will be control of DVDs through manufacturing for certain geographical regions. Discs purchased within one of eight proposed regions such as the US or Australia would only be playable by their respective DVD players. This would stop international exports of cheap DVDs from foreign countries both for DVD players and films. By placing the protection within the hardware and discs, people would be forced into buying DVD hardware and discs within their geographical regions of distribution. Here again problems arise, as some manufacturers are said to provide international players capable of playing all regions.

The future of LaserDisc

For those who are toying with purchasing a LaserDisc, I would recommend DVD technology instead. It boasts higher picture quality than both VHS and LaserDisc, and the players are much smaller and cheaper to manufacture. The survival prospects of LaserDisc looks bleak because of the overwhelming benefits offered by the superior DVD technology. It is said that LaserDisc titles will continue to be manufactured but may begin to fade out as DVD gains a wider market share. A hint for those who own LaserDisc technology—sell it while it still has some value and jump onto the DVD wagon.

Selecting a DVD player

As with all new technology, be very cautious about buying the first generation of players. There are already several flavours of units, ranging from CD-ROM units for your PC from Creative Labs to stand-alone units from Hitachi. Shop around for something that fits your budget and home environment. Whichever unit you pick, think of the associated benefits offered by different units. These range from playing all-region DVDs, offering zooming with Picture-in-Picture (PIP) viewing, built-in surround sound amplifiers (Prologic-AC3), and some even offer a Pentium 200 under their hood. Those player units with built-in modems can surf the web with all display being shown on your TV. My best advice is: Use the web to learn more and don't buy the first unit you see. There are already dozens of units out there and the numbers are growing weekly.

End-user benefits

For the last few years the 650 MB storage capacity has been exceeded by many CD developers and users. Games and music compilations have appeared on multiple CDs showing the limitations of the humble CD. The new generation of DVD is addressing those needs with up to 12 times the storage of conventional CD media. It will prove to be the storage of choice in the near future with more room for video, computer data, and the possibility of re-writables (DVD-RAMs). This super CD technology is likely to replace audio CDs and domestic VCRs in the long term. The current high costs will keep the technology out of reach for most audio and video buffs. As with all new technology, costs will begin to come down to reasonable level as DVD gains more market acceptance. There is just one more thing before you go out looking for a player. If you think that the future of video is definitely going to be all digital, then spare a thought for High Definition Television (HDTV) which is also just around the corner!

About the author

Peter Stanski is a freelance computer consultant and developer. He is currently completing his Ph.D. in distributed systems, networks and mobile agents.

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pstanski@broncho.ct.monash.edu.au

Web: *http://www.rgb.com.au* □

Training courses: February — March

Info Box

Where are courses held?

At the group's premises, usually in the Training Room. Some courses are held in the SIG room so check when you arrive.

The address is 27 Dorcas Street (Cnr of Wells Street), South Melbourne VIC 3205

How do I get there?

There is usually plenty of parking available nearby in the evenings or at weekends or tram to corner of St. Kilda Rd and Dorcas Street and walk two blocks down Dorcas Street.

Important!

You will obtain greater benefit from a course if you have the skills recommended by trainers as prerequisites for their courses. Otherwise, you may not be able to keep up with the class practical sessions.

How do I book a course?

Please use the order form on page 31 or (for credit card orders only) phone or fax the office (numbers on page 3).

Early enrolment is advised as places are limited. Enrolments/bookings without payment will **not** be accepted.

I have something to say!

You can contact Training with suggestions for courses or other training-related matters by sending e-mail to Lynn Pollock at *lynn@melbpc.org.au*

Tip

Bring a blank diskette (or two). You may be able to take away copies of shareware or documents you produce during classes. □

Courses by request

These courses are available by request subject to minimum student numbers. Please register your interest with the office.

- **Using the Internet with Windows 3.x**
- **Computer Basics**

Application courses

Quicken for small business $180

Viv Martin
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Mon 9, 16, 23 Feb, 2 Mar.
Bookkeeping, record keeping, producing reports for accountants using Quicken or Quicken for Business.
Prerequisites: Basic Windows experience assumed.

Office 97 overview $45

Len Krois
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Fri 27 Mar.
Overview of the major new and revised features, including the Internet Web features. This course will help people who are trying to decide on an office suite, or people who are considering when to upgrade.
Prerequisites: Acquaintance with Office 95/3.1 or another integrated Windows Office suite would enhance the experience, but no specifics are needed.

Introduction to Powerpoint $45

Caroline Houston
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Thu 12 Feb.
This course gives an introduction to the capability of the tools, using the templates and wizards, creating graphics and creating standard slides. Students will create presentations that can be given as on-screen shows or printed for use on an overhead projector. This course is a must in preparation for your next meeting/conference delivery.
Prerequisites: Familiarity with Windows 95 including mouse and keyboard skills.

Intermediate Powerpoint $45

Caroline Houston
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Wed 11 Mar.
This course gives a more in-depth perspective to creating presentations using enhanced graphics and special transformations from slide to slide. Students will create presentations that can be given as on-screen shows or printed for use on an overhead projector. This course is a must in preparation for your next meeting/conference delivery.
Prerequisites: Familiarity with Windows 95 including mouse and keyboard skills. This course also assumes familiarity with Powerpoint in creating basic slides and basic graphics or attendance at the Introduction course.

MS Word v6/7/97 essentials $45.00

NEW!*

Jill Renison
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Thu 19 Feb.
Setting up MS Word to work the way you want it to. Creating, saving and editing documents, text enhancements, document management. What you need to know to start using Word effectively and efficiently.
Prerequisites: Familiarity with the Windows environment including mouse and keyboard skills.

MS Word v6/7/97 enhancing documents $66

Jill Renison
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Tue 17 Mar.
On completion of this course students will be able to create and modify the appearance of a table, enter data into a table, create columns and frames, import graphics, create captions and embed drawings, and use Word Art effectively.
Prerequisites: Familiarity with the Windows environment including mouse and keyboard skills. Students should be able to cut, copy and paste text and should have a basic knowledge of Word for Windows.

Communication courses

Communications workshop $60

Doug Brooke
9.00 am–1.00 pm, Sat 28 Feb.
Accessing and using the BBS, configuring a communications program, problems and diagnoses, networks, netmail, file transfers.
Prerequisites: None.
See also: File management, archiving and compression techniques.

Introduction to the Melb PC BBS $45

Lynn Pollock
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Fri 13 Mar.
A basic examination of the Melb PC BBS covering initial logon, menu system, message areas, file areas and transfers, plus tips and tricks.
Prerequisites: None.
See also: File management, archiving and compression techniques.

Internet courses

Note: If you are starting with minimal knowledge, we suggest that the Internet courses are best attended in the sequence shown. More advanced students should attend at their skill level.
A special Windows 3.1 Internet course is available by request, subject to minimum student numbers. Register with the office.

I. Introduction to the Internet $45

Lynn Pollock
9.00 am–12 noon, Sat 14 Feb.
9.00 am–12 noon, Sun 22 Mar.
An overview of the Melb PC Internet service. Live explanations of all the major programs that make up the Internet. Full detailed discussion of the hardware and software items involved. General questions concerning Internet connections.
Prerequisites: None.
See also: File management, archiving and compression techniques.

2. Using the Internet with Windows 95 $90

Lynn Pollock
9.00 am–4.00 pm, Sun 1 Feb.
9.00 am–4.00 pm, Sat 14 Mar.
This is the basic course for Windows 95 users. It suits people about to install Win 95 Internet software or novice users of the Internet who want a full explanation of the basic setup and techniques involved. Hands-on individual installation of 32-bit Internet software. Explanation, discussion and live student Internet connections to demonstrate and practice all the major components.
Prerequisites: Must be experienced with Win 95.

3. Advanced Internet Part 1: Effectively using Web browsers $60

Lynn Pollock
1.00 pm–5.00 pm, Sat 14 Mar.
1.00 pm–5.00 pm, Sun 22 Mar.
Complete examination and discussion of all the features in the latest versions of both Netscape and MS Internet Explorer. Configuring, bookmark and favourite management, saving images and data, offline viewing of saved information, effective use of search engines and techniques, and tips and tricks. Students have live Internet connections to practice their searching techniques.
Prerequisites: Students should have attended the basic Internet course or have a good understanding of Internet principles. This is an advanced course.

4. Advanced Internet Part 2: Internet Workshop $90

Lynn Pollock
9.00 am–4.00 pm, Sun 15 Feb.
9.00 am–4.00 pm, Sat 21 Mar.
Complete discussion and live student Internet connections examining all the features that make up the Internet today, with the exception of Web browsers. Students will gain experience with the following: Advanced e-mail, FTP, Archie, Gopher, Finger, Telnet, IRC Network, Internet Phone, newsgroups and list servers, also connection problems and tips and tricks.
Prerequisites: Students should have attended the basic Internet course or have a good understanding of Internet principles. This is an advanced course.

Advanced HTML/Web page authoring $90

Final *

Steven Goldate
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Tue 17, 24 Feb.
This course continues on from the Beginner's HTML course with participants developing enhanced Web pages. Advanced principles of HTML design; tables; frames; image maps; sound; slide shows (auto-refresh) uploading files to a server; CGI scripts (forms); JAVA applets; Netscape and MS Explorer specific tags and more.
Prerequisites: Beginners' HTML/Web page authoring course.

HTML/Web page authoring $125

NEW! *

Steven Goldate
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Mon 16, 23, 30 Mar.
This course replaces the Beginners' and Advanced HTML courses. Participants learn to write HTML (HyperText Markup language) using a text based and a WYSIWYG editor and go on to develop enhanced Web pages. Topics to be covered include the principles of HTML for writing Web pages, design aspects, things to do and not do, image file formats, uploading files to a server and getting noticed. Advanced principles of HTML design include Tables; Frames; Image Maps; Sound; Slide Shows (Auto-refresh); CGI Scripts(Forms); JAVA Applets; Netscape & MS Explorer specific tags and more.
Prerequisites: Basic Windows experience assumed. Experience using a text editor preferred.

Operating system and hardware courses

How to buy a computer $10/$60

Members: $10. Non-members: $60 (includes first year's subscription).
Tom Coleman
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Wed 25 Feb.
What a computer does, what the jargon means, buying advice, tips and traps, no sales talk!
Prerequisites: None.

Housekeeping a computer $45

Tom Coleman
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Tue 10 Mar.
Optimising disk space and minimising file loss or corruption. Avoiding data loss plus organising information.
Prerequisites: Familiarity with DOS command syntax, directory structure and file management and with computing terminology.

File management, archiving and compression techniques $45

Lynn Pollock
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Fri 13 Feb.
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Fri 20 Mar.
Explanation of file management including virus location, files you can delete, and file errors. Archiving, covering some of the more common programs used and basic backup strategies. Additionally some techniques will be discussed for files you download from the BBS or Internet. This course stands on its own and also complements Introduction to the Melb PC BBS, Communications Workshop and Introduction to the Internet.
Prerequisites: Must be familiar with Windows.

Memory management $45

Tom Coleman
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Wed 18 Mar.
Students will be aware of the differences between the various kinds of memory, basic memory management requirements, and memory management techniques.
Prerequisites: Familiarity with DOS command syntax, directory structure and file management and with using a text editor.

Virus protection and recovery $45

Tom Coleman
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Thu 26 Mar.
Understanding what a virus is. Different forms of computer viruses and their methods of infection. How to avoid virus infection, and what to do if virus infection occurs.
Prerequisites: Familiarity with DOS command syntax, directory structure and file management and with disk organisation and memory structure.

Hardware upgrade and repairs $90

Tom Coleman
10.00 am–5.00 pm, Sat 7 Feb.
10.00 am–5.00 pm, Sat 28 Mar.
Students will be able to dismantle and re-assemble a computer, replace major components. Be aware of the basic "rules" and conventions of computer building. Know enough to get started on simple jobs.
Prerequisites: Familiarity with the basic functions of each of a computer's parts.

Introduction to UNIX $45

Len Krois
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Wed 11 Feb.
UNIX/LINUX basics for people who want a basic feel for the open systems environment. LINUX is a popular shareware version of UNIX that will run on IBM-compatible PCs. The session includes logging onto a UNIX system, finding your way around, manipulating files, viewing and editing text files, using the on-line text manual.
Prerequisites: Command line computing knowledge preferred.

Overview of Windows 95 $45

Barry Fredrickson
9.30 am–12.30 pm, Sat 28 Feb.
Students will learn about the Windows 95 Desktop, Help, Explorer, Find, shortcuts, and some of the Windows 95 utilities like Wordpad and Notepad.
Prerequisites: Familiarity with Win 95, including mouse and keyboard skills.

Upgrade to Windows 95 $119

Mary Levens
9.00 am–4.00 pm, Sun 1 Mar.
An understanding of the new features of Windows 95, and how they differ from Windows 3.1. Using "Shortcuts". Customising Windows 95. A comprehensive exercise manual included.
Prerequisites: Familiarity with Windows 3.1x, including operation of Program Manager, Control Panel and File Manager.

Starting Windows 95 $119

Mary Levens
9.00 am–4.00 pm, Sun 8 Feb.
6.30 pm–9.30 pm, Tue 24, 31 Mar.
Introduces the Windows 95 environment to the computer novice. You'll learn basic Windows jargon and terminology, how to accomplish everyday tasks and all of the skills you'll need to work in Windows 95. Students will receive a comprehensive exercise manual.
Prerequisites: None.

Advanced Windows 95 $90

Lynn Pollock
9.00 am–4.00 pm, Sun 15 Mar.
A full and detailed examination of Windows 95 for experienced users. Topics include adding hardware, registry control and editing, backup techniques, communications, networking with Windows 95, conflict resolution, enhancing performance, system maintenance, and many tips and tricks.
Prerequisites: Must be familiar with Win 95. □

9699 6222

Trainers Required

We require specialist trainers in the following subjects:

- Introduction to programming
- Visual Basic
- MS Excel

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Introduction to Networks

Trainer: Len Krois

Prerequisites: The course is designed for participants who are seeking basic networking skills. Students are expected to have a working knowledge of Windows, DOS and the basics of file management and general computer operation.

Description: On completion of the course, participants will be able to install network cards, network software and configure small networks. During the course, students build, install, configure and operate their own network. They will have overview knowledge of network terminology, design and architecture, the networking standards and topology.

Topics

Theory :
What is a network
Why network
Network standards
Hardware topology

Practical:
Hardware installation
Network cabling
Network software configuration
Networking resources

Materials:
Some notes are provided, but students should bring their own pens and paper for additional notes.

Note:
Students are encouraged to bring in examples of their specific requirements and concerns and the instructor will attempt to cover these during the sessions.

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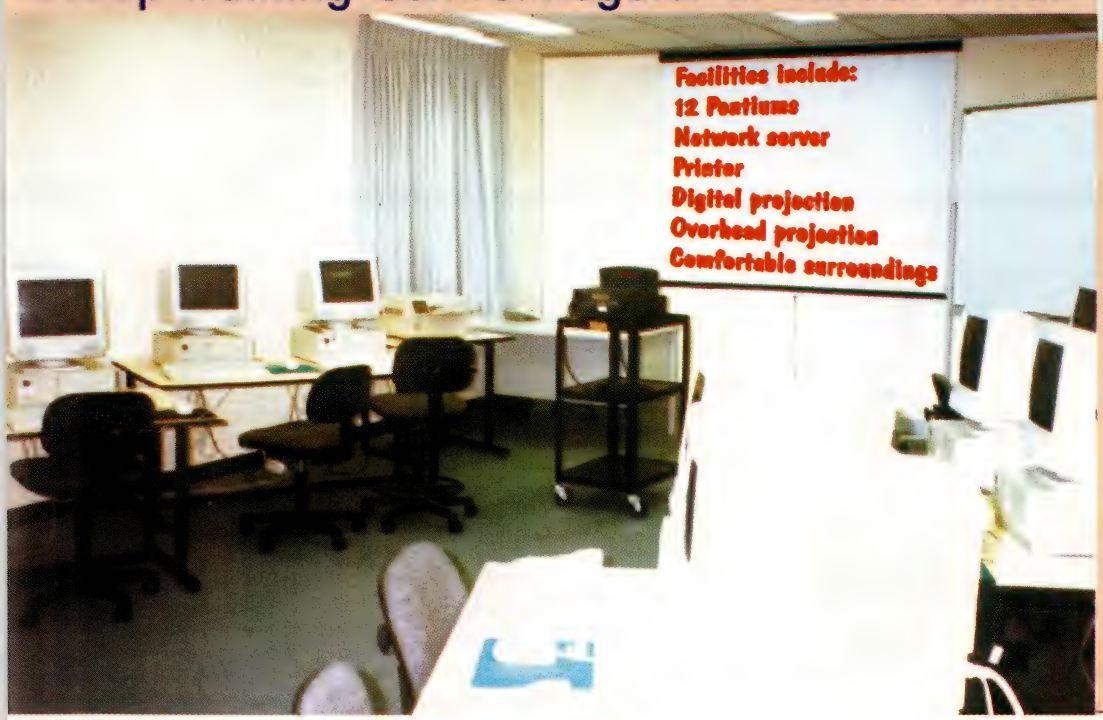


For further information contact:

Melbourne PC User Group Administration Office
27 Dorcas Street
South Melbourne
VIC 3205
Ph: (03) 9699 6222
Fax: (03) 9699 6499

Bernadette Houghton

Three graphics packages from ixla

Info Box

ixla Explorer 1.1

Minimum system requirements

- 486 processor
- Windows 95
- 8 MB RAM (16 MB recommended)
- 15 MB free hard disk space
- 256-colour graphics card (16-bit highly recommended)
- CD-ROM drive
- Mouse.

Availability / cost

From your local software reseller or contact
ISR Australia
Ph: (03) 9803 1600
Fax: (03) 9803 1695
or download a 5 MB trial from
http://www.isr.com.au

RRP $65 (but see p55)

ixla Explorer 1.1

ixla Explorer (iEXP) is an organiser for multimedia files. It uses the familiar Windows Explorer interface and offers you the additional benefit of viewing and manipulating graphic files within the same framework. If you have a digital camera or scanner, you can also retrieve and acquire images directly into iEXP.

How it works

Installation follows the usual Windows 95 setup routine. In my case, there were several tiresome interruptions, as the installation routine paused to ask permission to overwrite some files. Following the instructions in the README file, I chose "yes" and installation proceeded smoothly.

When iEXP starts for the first time, it opens to an intimidating Explorer-like window, with no thumbnails, no welcome screen and no indication of what to do next. At this point, I scrambled for the manual. The enlightening information—hidden in the middle of the manual—was that iEXP won't start creating thumbnails until you tell it to do so. You can choose to create thumbnails for specific files or folders; alternatively, you can switch on the Auto Create Thumbnails option, and iEXP will create thumbnails for all graphics in any folder you open. Thumbnails take some time to build initially, but iEXP stores them so they display very quickly next time you open the folder.

iEXP has two modes: Explorer mode and Catalog mode, each with their own window pane on the left of the screen (Figure 1). When Explorer mode is active, iEXP displays the contents of your folders in the large display pane. In Catalog mode, iEXP displays the contents of your catalogues instead—virtual folders containing links to your graphic files. Determining which mode is active is a bit confusing at first, but you soon learn to recognise the signs. Double-clicking a thumbnail in either mode opens a large image in the display pane and causes the thumbnails to move to a Navigation bar that appears on the far right of the screen (Figure 2). You can zoom in and out of the large image, scroll the window if need be, or pan the image with your mouse. Further, you can resize or rotate the image, and convert it to a different file format. Double-clicking the large image (or any non-graphic file icon) opens the file in its associated program.

There is no limit to the number of catalogues

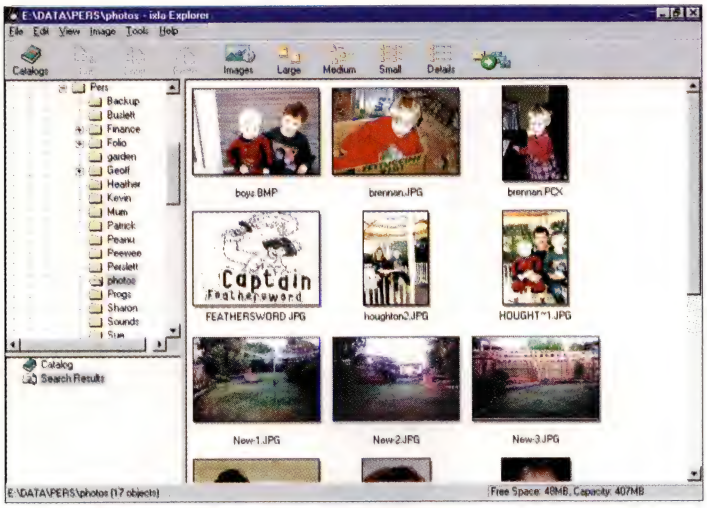


Figure 1. ixla Explorer in Explorer mode

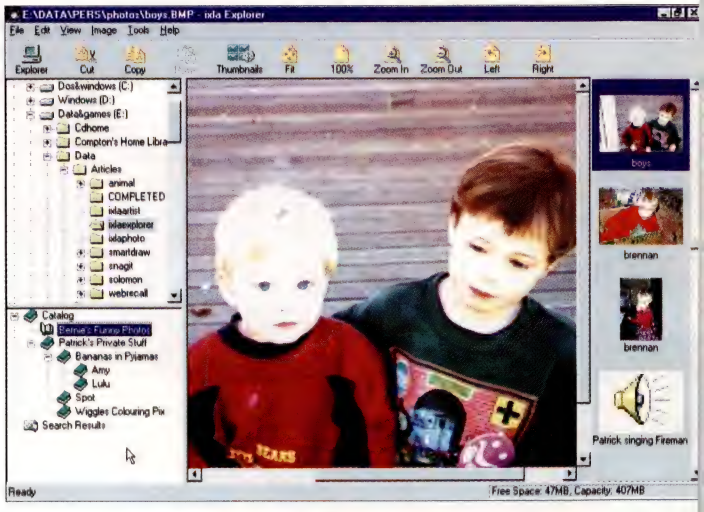


Figure 2. ixla Explorer in Catalog mode

a nice tool to have

if you work a lot

with graphic files

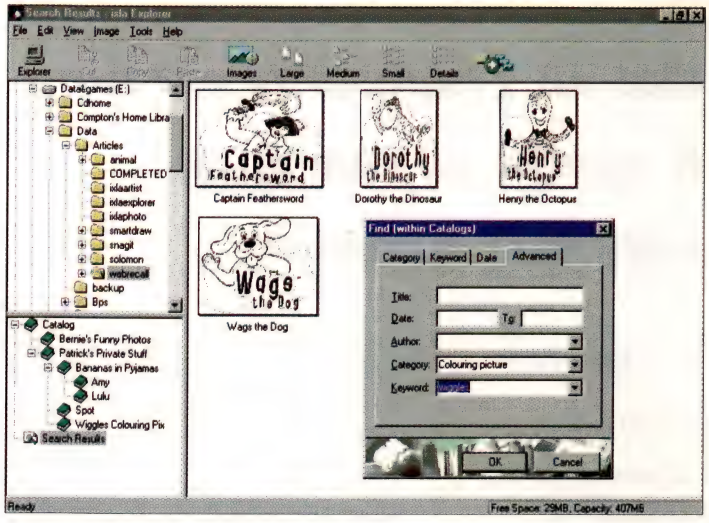


Figure 3. Searching iEXP's catalogues

and sub-catalogues you can create, apart from available hard disk space. To add a graphic to a catalogue, you simply drag it from the display pane in Explorer mode, and drop it onto the appropriate catalogue in the Catalog window. For each graphic, you can record the author and title, allocate keywords and a subject category of your choice, and append a few notes. If you're looking for a specific graphic, iEXP's Find tool will search across all catalogues to match your criteria (Figure 3).

You can create slide-shows of your multimedia files, including videos and sound. To make them more interesting, you can apply various fade in/fade out transitions. By default, iEXP creates slide-shows from all the multimedia files in the current folder, but you can customise this by creating catalogues for each slide-show you wish to present. I was able to use this feature to create a simple but effective screensaver showing my children growing up over the years.

Downloading photographs

If you have a digital camera, you can browse the photos before choosing to download them into iEXP. Not having a digital camera, I couldn't test this facility; however, iEXP claims to support most popular digital cameras. If your camera is not in iEXP's list, you can still download your photos using the TWAIN driver shipped with your camera.

I had no problems acquiring images from my old hand-held scanner into iEXP. This simply involved selecting File-Twain Acquire from iEXP's menu. My scanner software started automatically, and when I had finished scanning, iEXP automatically created and named a bitmap file for me. Simple and easy.

Assessment

My introduction to iEXP was a little unfriendly, but once I'd overcome the initial difficulties, I found it ran well and was easy to use. My biggest problem was getting used to the dialog boxes, as the command buttons become lost in the surrounding graphics (Figure 4). iEXP takes a few minutes to fire up on my 486DX2-66, but once started runs fairly fast and efficiently. On the whole, ixla Explorer is a nice tool to have if you work a lot with graphic files. □

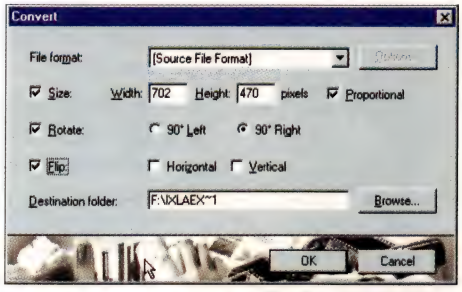


Figure 4. A typical dialog box

ixlaArtist 1.3

iXLAArtist (iART) is one of the most enticing image-editing programs I've seen. Not only does it have a beguilingly attractive interface and an excellent video tutorial, its developers have struck a good balance between user-friendliness and power for non-graphics professionals.

iART is packaged with 5000 royalty-free photos and 1000 clip art images that you are free to use as you wish. By default, it saves it own files in Adobe Photoshop 2.5 format, but also reads and writes a large range of other graphic file formats. If you have a TWAIN-supported scanner or digital camera, you'll also be able to retrieve images directly into iART.

The interface

If you're new to image-editing programs, the best way to learn iART is to do the tutorial, which presents half a dozen topics in simple, straightforward steps. If you're already familiar with image-editing programs, you'll be able to jump straight in. The interface is very attractive, with large, colourful icons, and screen clutter kept to a minimum. There is a toolbar that displays a few standard Windows commands, a Toolbox that offers a range of tools for viewing and manipulating images and an unobtrusive Colors palette offering a selection of colours. An Inspector displays user-controlled parameters for the active tool and does away with the need for endless dialog boxes. The menu bar offers a few additional commands, but iART is fairly simply structured; most tools and commands are only a click or two away, and simple slider controls are the norm.

Selection tools

If you want to work on only part of your image, you'll first need to select (mask) the area so your changes are confined to that part. iART offers several selection tools, including Ellipse, PolyLine, Freehand, Rectangle,

like all graphics programs—it needs to run on a very fast machine

Info Box

ixlaArtist 1.1

Minimum system requirements

- 486 processor
- Windows 3.x/NT 3.51
- 8 MB RAM (16 MB for Windows NT)
- 15 MB free hard disk space (minimum installation)
- 256-colour graphics card
- CD-ROM drive
- Mouse.

Availability / cost

From your local software reseller or contact
ISR Australia
Ph: (03) 9803 1600
Fax: (03) 9803 1695
or download a 1.8 MB demo from *http://www.isr.com.au*

RRP $129 (but see p55)

Lines, Shapes, Magic Wand (which selects adjoining colours within a specified tolerance level) and Text. Most tools serve double duty as drawing tools, meaning there are fewer tools to learn and less screen clutter. Before you use each tool, you indicate in the Inspector whether you wish to create a selection (this is the default), a filled area or a floating selection with fill. While this usually works very well, you can't easily create borders around your shapes. It can be done, but takes some messing around.

By using various mouse buttons and keyboard keys while creating a selection (or filled area), you can create multiple selections, adjust existing selections, and even move and rotate selections. This feature is particularly handy, as you can perform a whole series of commands in a single series of mouse movements—move a selection, resize it, move it again, then rotate it, for instance. You can choose to smooth jagged edges of your selections, contract or expand them by a pre-defined number of pixels, or grow them to include similar colours. If you 'float' selections, you can make them transparent and manipulate them without affecting the underlying image.

Retouching tools

Retouch tools available in the Toolbox include:

- Clone, which duplicates part of the image
- Adjust, which adjusts the colour balance, saturation and brightness according to the HSB colour model
- Exposure, which paints the image darker or lighter
- Focus, which sharpens or blurs the image
- Vaccum, which removes dust and scratches.

There is also an Effects tool that allows you to paint certain effects onto your image. For most tools, you can control the transparency and the style of the brush, as well as a few tool-specific properties.

A few image manipulation commands are available on the menu bar, including (among others) Negate, Threshold and Brightness/Contrast. Applying these commands is mostly a matter of moving slider controls until you achieve the effect you want. There are different dialog boxes for each effect, and you can usually preview the results instantly on the image itself.

Brush tools

Natural brush tools include Airbrush, Brush, Calligraphy, Crayon, Eraser, Pencil, Pen and Smudge. Most tools offer several variants; for example, Crayon offers a choice of Wax Crayon, Chalk or Charcoal. For each brush, you can control some nib properties and the colour of the paint, although not the transparency. You can control transparency, however, for custom brushes and for the Bucket and Gradient Fill tools. You can't save custom brushes, but the Gradient Fill tool, in particular, offers several graduation patterns and a high level of flexibility.

Special effects

iART offers 31 special effects, among them Blur, Lighting, Shake, 3D Distortion and Ripple. You can add further effects by using third-party plug-ins that conform to the Adobe PhotoShop standard. As with the retouch tools, you apply special effects by manipulating slider controls. Once again, you can usually preview the results

Figure 1. Using a variety of selection tools. Current tool is Magic Wand

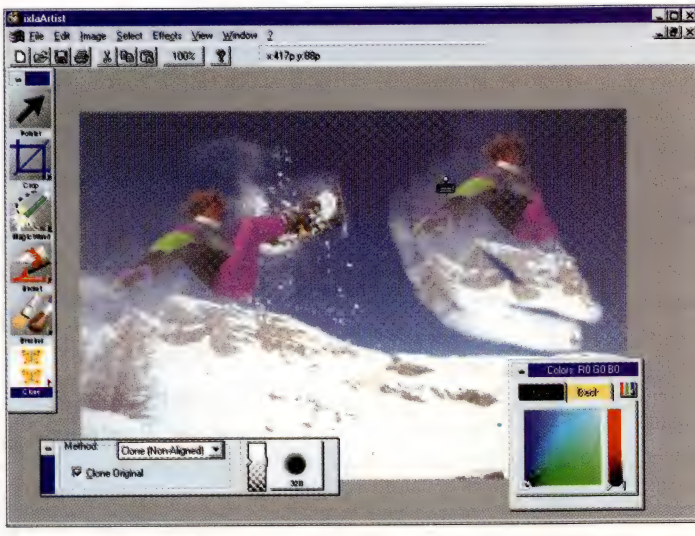


Figure 2. Using the Clone tool

nstantly, either on the image itself or –this time—in a preview window on he dialog box. The preview window hows only a very small portion of he image, but you can pan around it o get a better view, and the results ppear almost instantly. The Color alance tool also includes By Example humbnails, with different colour ettings applied to each thumbnail.

've always found applying special ffects the most frustrating aspect of nage-editing programs, since they ake so much time and processing ower. As far as speed goes, on my 86DX2-66 iART is quite slow at pplying special effects, but is ertainly no worse than other nage-editing programs.

Output control

ART allows you to adjust the Profile, Matching and Calibration for your nput and output devices and nonitor. Unfortunately, neither the nline manual nor the user manual xplain what these—or the available ptions—mean. Colour models upported include Bilevel, Grayscale, ndexed, RGB, Lab, CYMK and HSB. 'ou can create custom palettes, and ave them for later use. When the me comes to output your work, you an print colour separations, negative nages, and various crop, registration nd calibration marks.

Optimising ixlaArtist

ART supports unlimited Undo levels, ut in practice you'll find that you're onstrained by the amount of free isk space in your system, and by the peed at which iART runs—the more 'ndo levels you nominate, the slower ART will operate. Apart from veaking the number of Undo levels, ou can select certain options to speed up screen redraws, and reserve a nominated percentage of your RAM for iART's sole use. iART supports up to four scratch disks or directories, so you may be able to squeeze out further performance by using your fastest disks as the primary scratch disks.

Assessment

iART's developers have succeeded very well in striking a balance between ease of use and power for those with modest graphic needs. All the tools are easily accessible, there are enough of them to allow you to achieve some eye-catching effects, but not too many to be overwhelming. The tutorial does an excellent job of showing you how to use the program and the dazzling interface is a bonus.

As for the negatives, there are some of course, but you can easily work around many of them. For instance, precise text placement is tricky—but you can easily adjust it with the arrow keys; you can't save masks, but you can copy and paste them into another document for temporary storage. There are a few negatives not so easily overcome. For example, the status bar is a let down—it is located on the title bar, and operates only for first-level menu items; layer support is non-existent, although you can "float" a single object above the page (but keep in mind that iART is aimed at non-graphics professionals). However, my biggest quibble with iART is that—like all graphics programs—it needs to run on a very fast machine.

If you need an image-editing program without all the whiz-bang features of the high-end graphic programs and have at least a Pentium, I highly recommend ixlaArtist. □

Figure 3. Applying a Perturbing special effect

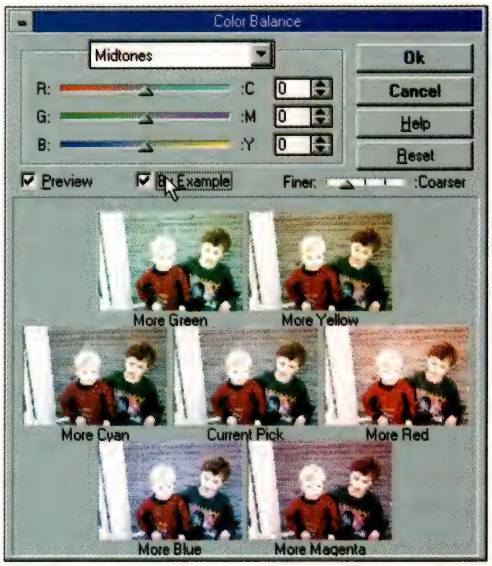


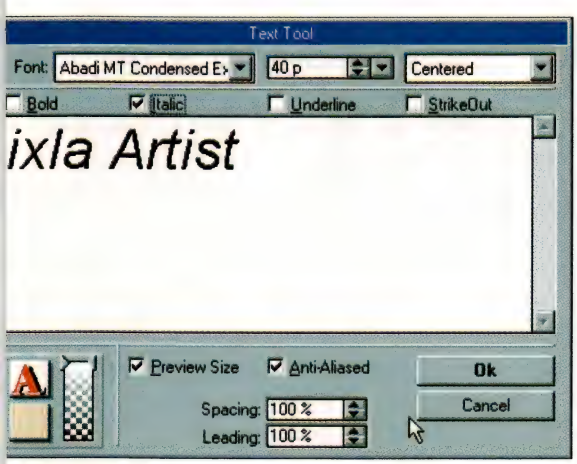
Figure 4. Adjusting the colour balance

Special member prices

ISR are offering Melb PC members substantial discounts off the RRP quoted in the reviews:

ixla Explorer	$35 + $5 p&h
ixlaArtist	$75 + $5 p&h
ixla Photo Scanner Suite	$75 + $5 p&h

To take advantage of these special offers, phone 1800 066 797 and quote your membership number and credit card number.



ure 5. Using the text editor

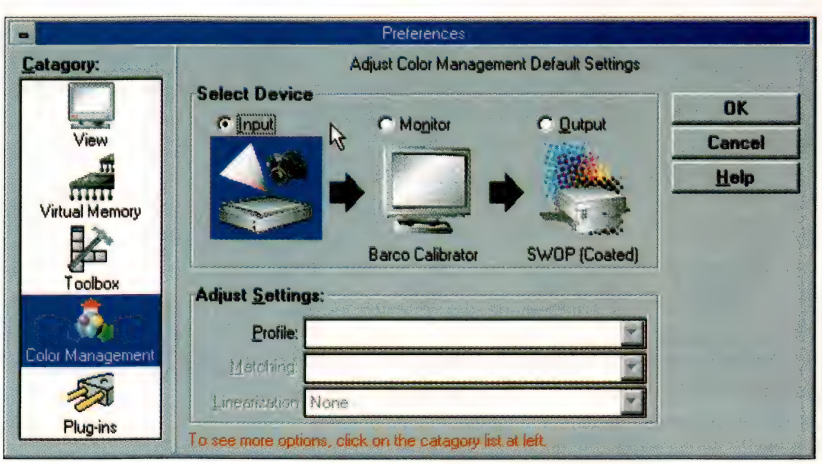


Figure 6. Setting system preferences

ixla Photo Scanner Suite 1.2

Info box

ixla Photo Scanner Suite 1.2

- 486 processor
- Windows 3.x/ NT 3.51
- 8 MB RAM (16 MB recommended)
- 15 MB free hard disk space (minimum installation)
- 256-colour graphics card (16-bit highly recommended)
- CD-ROM drive
- Mouse.

Availability / cost

From your local software reseller or contact
ISR Australia
Ph: (03) 9803 1600
Fax: (03) 9803 1695
or download a 1.8 MB demo from
http://www.isr.com.au

RRP $129 (but see p55)

ixla Photo Scanner Suite (iPSS) offers a terrific way to maximise the fun you get out of your photographs. Create personalised photo albums, cards or calendars and tart them up with snazzy effects, sound or animated text. Print the results, publish them to the Web or e-mail them to your friends and relatives.

I had lots of fun... if you have a fast machine ... go for it!

How it works

I had no problems installing iPSS, which uses the standard Windows 95 setup procedure. Once installed, learning it is also quite straightforward, with a video tutorial offering a short, no-nonsense introduction to the main concepts.

When you first run iPSS (and thereafter, any time you choose), the Activity Guide offers some suggested activities. Among other things, you can create a calendar, Web page or greeting card, catalogue your photos or print an album. If you still don't know what to do, *101 Ideas* offers further inspiration. Choosing any idea or option either performs the activity without further ado, or invokes a helpful Assistant to walk you through the steps. Almost anything you can think of doing with iPSS, you can do with an Assistant at your side. I found the Assistants worked well most of the time, but occasionally started off with the wrong template. While it is not difficult to change templates when this happens, I sometimes didn't realise I was using the wrong template until some confusing minutes had elapsed.

Another interesting option on the Activity Guide is "Mix'n'Match". Here you click jigsaw puzzle pieces until you find a match. For example, clicking on Albums and Slideshow offers the opportunity to turn your album into an interactive slideshow; choosing Blank Design and Albums invokes the Photo Album Assistant. Mix'n'Match doesn't offer any new activity, but simply presents an alternative way to explore iPSS's capabilities.

iPSS classifies its resources into four types—photos, backgrounds, stencils and frames—which display in the Browser on the bottom of the screen. The Catalog toolbar on the far right displays the catalogues available for each resource type. iPSS comes with 100 MB of resources, organised into catalogues, and you can add as many more as your hard drive will support. You can create additional backgrounds, stencils and frames in any paint program. You'll have to follow iPSS's specifications, but these are fairly simple. For example, stencils—which add visual interest such as fading edges and fancy borders or corners—use two special colours to determine which parts of your photos will display, and which parts will remain transparent.

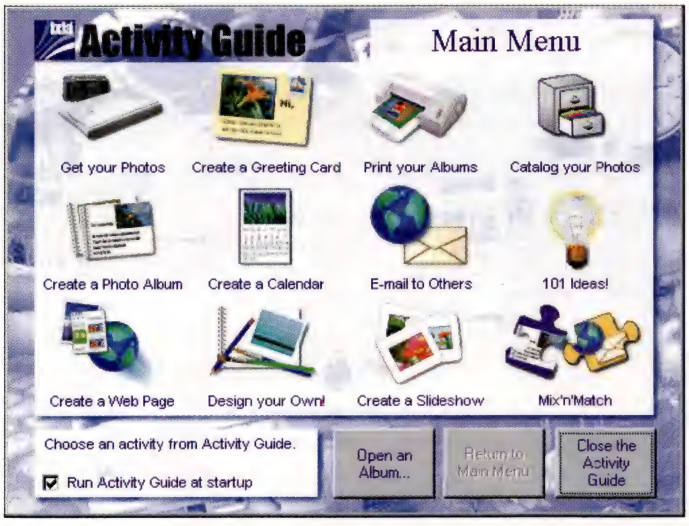


Figure 1. The Activity Guide

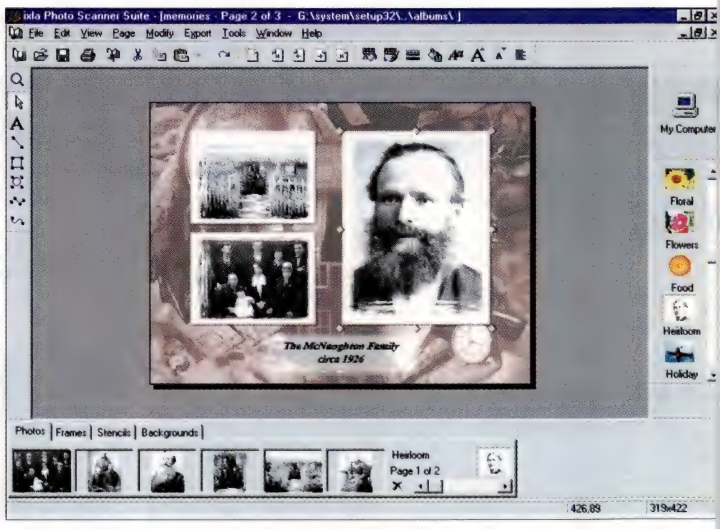


Figure 2. Creating a photo album

Figure 3. Using the Photo Album Assistant

To create an album (or card or Web page or whatever) without an Assistant's help, you drag resources from the Browser and drop them onto the page. If you want photos to fit into a frame automatically, just drop them on the frame moulding. Whether iPSS fits a frame to a photo or vice versa depends on which option you have set previously. Stencils always resize to fit the photo.

You can manipulate your photos by cropping, resizing and rotating, and applying some effects. Effects include Brightness, Contrast, Emboss, Transparency and some dozen others. Drawing tools include Line, Polyline, Rectangle, Curve and Text, and there are a few simple drawing commands such as Order, Align and Make Same Size. If you can't think of any text of your own, a Text Assistant offers a variety of common phrases. You can animate your text (and also each page) with fade in/fade out effects, add navigation buttons and hypertext links, and attach sound files to each album page. iPSS has a built-in sound recorder, but you can attach existing sound files if you prefer.

Before you can actually start working with your photos, you need to get them into your computer and into a catalogue. iPSS supports a large range of graphic files, including AVI. You can download photos directly from a digital camera or scanner; alternatively, you can have them scanned, either at the time of processing or afterwards. I don't have a digital camera, so I couldn't test iPSS's download facility; however, the process seems quite straightforward. I do have a hand-held scanner, but couldn't get it to work with iPSS for some unknown reason.

Once you've created an album, you can view it as a slideshow, or export it in a variety of formats. Export formats include HTML, VRML, animated GIF or a Player package that you can distribute to others. Choosing the Player option packages your album and the Player installation files so it will run on another PC. If you have a MAPI-compatible e-mail system, you can also e-mail your iPSS output.

Assessment

Despite a few hiccups with iPSS—the Assistants missing a beat or two, an inability to get my scanner to work with iPSS, slow speed on my 486DX2-66 and a couple of interface quibbles—I had lots of fun. If you have a fast machine and are entranced by ixla Photo Scanner Suite's possibilities—go for it! □

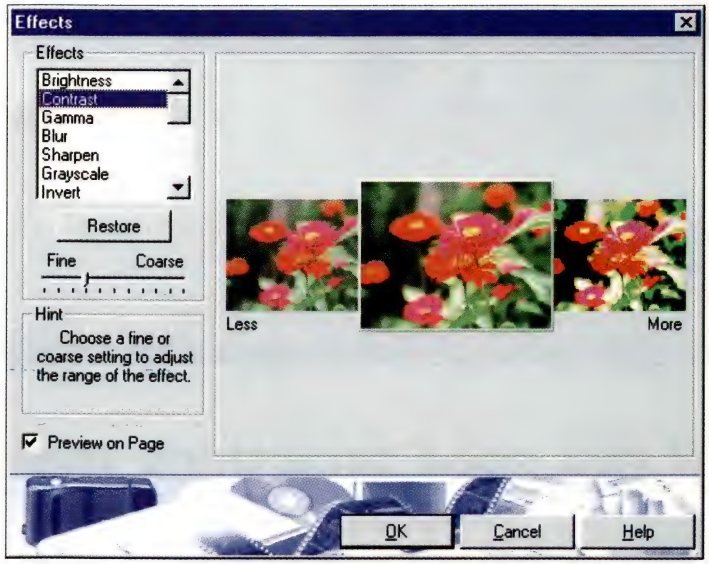


Figure 4. Applying special effects to your photos

Figure 5. Viewing an album in the Player

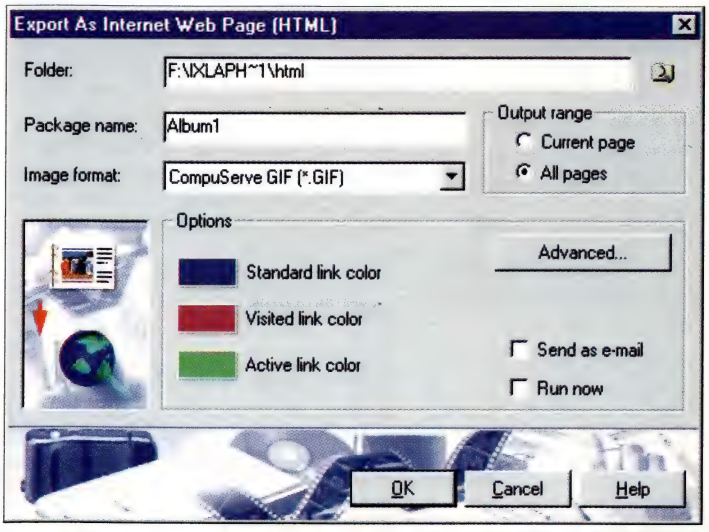


Figure 6. Exporting an album as an HTML file

Bernadette Houghton

SmartDraw 3.1

if you need something that lets you create standard drawings quickly, it's worth a look

SMARTDRAW

Info Box

SmartDraw 3.1

Minimum system requirements

16-bit SmartDraw

- Windows 3.1
- 386

32-bit SmartDraw 95

- Windows 95/ NT (3.51 or 4.0)

Both versions

- CD-ROM drive
- 30 MB free hard disk space for a full installation.

Availability / cost

You can download a 1.6 MB trial version from *http://www.dunson.com.au* otherwise contact the distributor
Dunson Pty Ltd
Ph: (03) 9706 8773
Fax: (03) 9706 8704

RRP: $79

If you're in the market for a business drawing program and don't need a lot of fancy fripperies, SmartDraw may suit you. It is a fairly bare-bones program, but has a few features that magically automate some commonly tricky tasks. You won't have to spend a lot of time mastering its intricacies, and if you only use it once in a while, it won't take much re-learning.

You can evaluate SmartDraw for 45 days before deciding whether to purchase it. Fully enabled 16- and 32-bit trial versions are distributed through various online sources, including the Internet. When you go ahead and purchase SmartDraw, you'll be sent a copy of both the 16- and 32-bit versions, a manual and a collection of 1500+ templates and prepared shapes. Similarly to other diagramming programs, SmartDraw organises its shapes into symbol libraries, which you can add to or re-organise if you wish. Libraries cover a range of areas, including flowcharting, electrical and mechanical engineering, space planning, network diagramming and so on. New symbol libraries are also available from time to time on the SmartDraw Web site.

How it works

The easiest and quickest way to create a drawing is to open a template and modify the existing template diagram. All templates contain not only pre-defined settings for specific drawing types, but also simple drawings. For those people who find blank white screens rather intimidating, they are a great convenience. While the templates are geared to the imperial measurement system, you can convert them to metric if need be.

Drawing tools include Text, Line, Curve, Segmented Line, Connector Line and 18 enclosed shapes. Unlike other drawing programs, which mostly use single tools for squares and rectangles, or circles and ellipses, Smart Draw has separate tools for each. This makes them easier to use, since you don't have to remember to hold down another key when creating squares and circles. Connector lines are good for creating flowcharts and similar diagrams, since they remain connected however much you move or re-size the linked shape. There is no freehand drawing tool, but you can access further shapes, called SmartDrawings, in the symbol libraries. SmartDrawings are programmable at a rudimentary level—you can control their default size, how they behave when re-sized and how they accept text (inside, above, below or not at all). You can create your own SmartDrawings, either with SmartDraw or other Windows drawing programs, and index them so you can easily find them later with the Symbol Browser.

There are two ways to add shapes to your page

- You can drag them from the standard toolbar or a symbol library and drop them where you wish—shapes made this way have similar size
- You can click on a shape button and then drag the shape out to the size you want.

Once your shape is on the page, you can manipulate it however you like, within SmartDraw's constraints.

To add text to a shape, you simply select it and begin typing; the shape grows proportionally to accommodate it. Text attached to shapes this way moves and rotates with the shape. Where the text appears in relation to the shape depends on how the shape has been previously programmed. Once you've entered the text, you can't change its location unless you delete the shape, re-program it and then drag it out again. Text formatting is quite flexible, with SmartDraw having the ability to format text character-by-character, giving free rein to your bad taste! Bullets are easy to insert, and a nice touch is the Increase/Decrease Text Size button on the toolbar. I did regret the absence of a drop-down

font listing, though.

SmartDraw supports most features common to other drawing packages, including basic snap-to-grid, alignment, object stacking, shape locking, styles, rotation, flipping and so on. You can break vector shapes apart, change them and then recombine them. However, this only works if the shapes form a closed loop and the ends of the lines match precisely; a very tricky process, I found. Compatible with Microsoft Office, SmartDraw can act as either an Office "applet" or a stand-alone application. It will export and import WMF, TIF, GIF, PCX, BMP and JPEG, and is also an OLE 2.0 server.

SmartDraw is particularly useful for creating flowcharts. Its automatic layout feature means you can simply drop a shape onto the page to have it inserted into the chart at that point, complete with connecting lines. Other shapes rearrange themselves without further ado, so you can insert new shapes, re-arrange them or remove them effortlessly; the basic shape of the chart remains the same whatever you do. This is a definite time-saver.

More nice features

- The ability to change the shape of lines, connectors and other objects with a click or two; for example, a Horizontal Double Fishbone Chart to a Two Column Organisation Chart, or a square to a circle of the same size
- Automatic centring of a drawing on the page
- Automatic dimensioning for lines and curves, with the dimensions altering whenever you resize the line
- One click resizing of an object to match another
- A Duplicate tool which recognises when you move a duplicated object, and places further duplications at a similar offset from each other
- The ability to link other drawings, programs, web pages or documents with a shape or line. By double-clicking the linked object, you can launch the associated document or program. Links are indicated by boxed cross symbols beside linked shapes.

You can jump straight in and learn SmartDraw without opening the manual, since helpful hints appear every time you make a mistake or try something new. These are quite detailed and sometimes intrusive, but they occur only once in each drawing session. You can also switch them off when you no longer need them.

Assessment

SmartDraw is not a difficult or complex program. Most of its features are quite limited, but it does have some redeeming qualities. These include its very simplicity and its ability to perform some complex manipulations with only a click or two.You can also become proficient with very little effort, thanks to the pop-up hints and the straightforward interface. While it is most suited to flowcharts and general business diagrams, it will do a reasonable job with other kinds of drawings as long as your requirements remain fairly simple.

Don't purchase SmartDraw for its flexibility or range of features, but if you need something that lets you create standard drawings quickly, it's worth a look. □

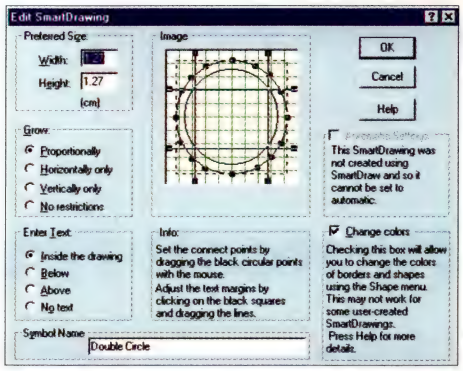


Figure 2. Programming SmartDraw symbols

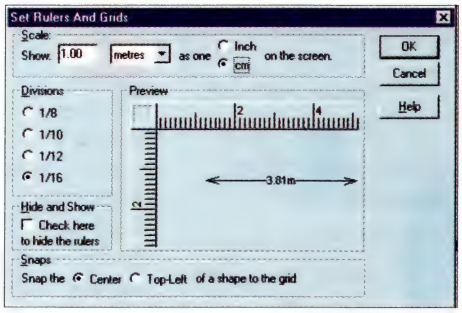


Figure 3. Defining rulers and snaps

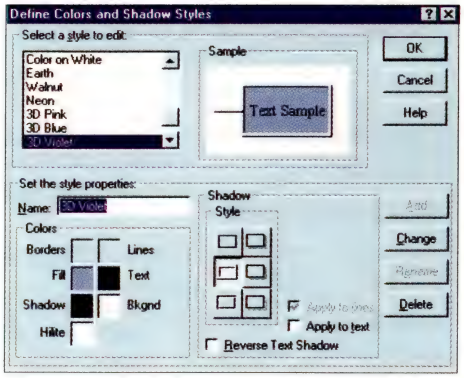


Figure 4. Defining drawing styles

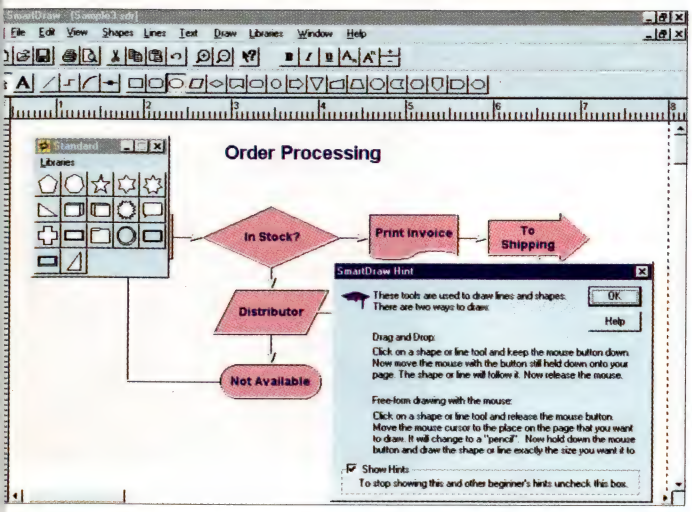


Figure 1. SmartDraw's pop-up hints

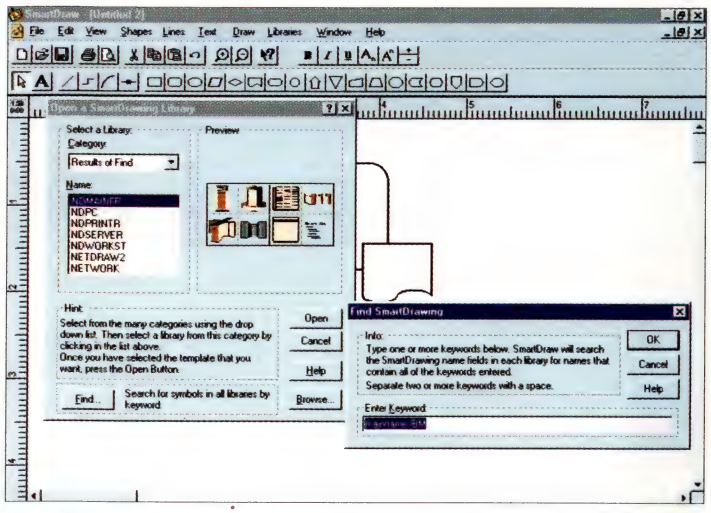


Figure 5. Searching the symbol libraries

Ash Nallawalla

Microsoft FrontPage 98

Info Box

MS FrontPage 98

URL: *http://www.microsoft.com/frontpage/*

Minimum system requirements

- 80486 CPU
- Windows 9x/NT 4
- 16 MB RAM (32 MB for NT)
- 36–94 MB disk space
- 256-colour VGA
- Pointing device
- Access to an Internet Web site server (if publishing)

Availability / cost

Available from large software resellers.

RRP: $179, for upgrade prices, see the list at *http://www.microsoft.com.au*

I received a polite note from Robin Howells asking me why one of my Web pages at *http://easyrsvp.com/neteditor/index.htm* was blank, other than the background. For the curious, that page is still in place but you will need Netscape to view the problem. My preferred browser is Microsoft Internet Explorer; a quick check told me everything was "fine" and I was about to mentally dismiss Robin's problem as a glitch. Something made me fire up Netscape 3 and the results horrified me.

I normally code pages with Notepad because I know the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) and it is fun. I test my pages at validation sites to be sure the code is free of syntax errors. Sometimes I add something and forget to test the page with Netscape. I run a visitor analysis script that tells me where the visitor came from, the browser used, the pages viewed, and so on. Of late most visitors were looking at one page only, which should have rung alarm bells.

FrontPage 98

Microsoft seems to take about three revisions to get a product "right" and I had heard horror stories about FrontPage, its web site authoring and management product. To be fair, there must be millions of web pages around the world created with it, and many of the criticisms were from HTML purists or unqualified novices.

One of the side effects of using an authoring package is that it adds more tags than one would code by hand. To use a word processing analogy, if you defined the beginning of a list to mean "Treat the following text as Helvetica", you would not need to define each list element as Helvetica—the typeface would not change. In many authoring packages, every paragraph is tagged in a seemingly superfluous manner. This is syntactically correct, but you could be increasing the byte count by almost 50 percent. You don't want your audience to wait longer than is necessary.

The "excessive" tagging can be ignored if you want to look at manual coding as a time-consuming activity that is best left as a pastime. However, if it is going to introduce errors or unplanned visual effects then you won't be happy. I will come to this later.

To get back to the problem noted by Robin, I had asked our Editor, Carol Daniels, to check this phenomenon using another version of Netscape. I found I could load the page after a couple of attempts but the first attempt would not let me view the source code. Carol could view the source. Anhow, the problem had to b fixed, but let us first look at FrontPage 98 (FP98).

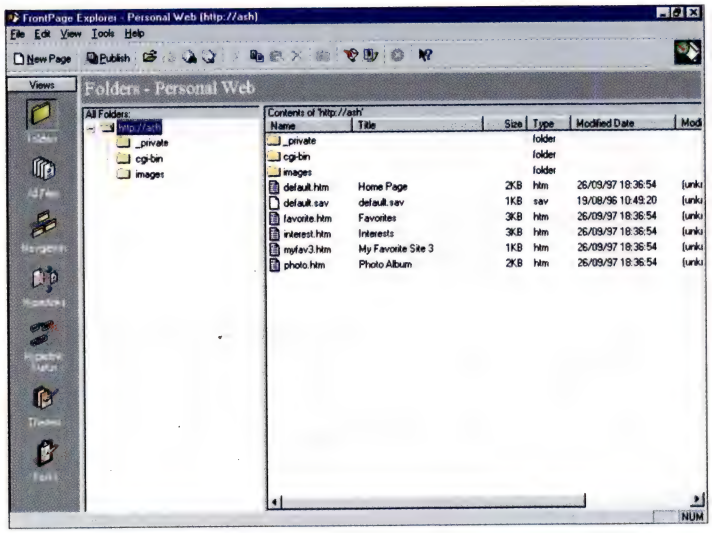


Figure 1. Main menu

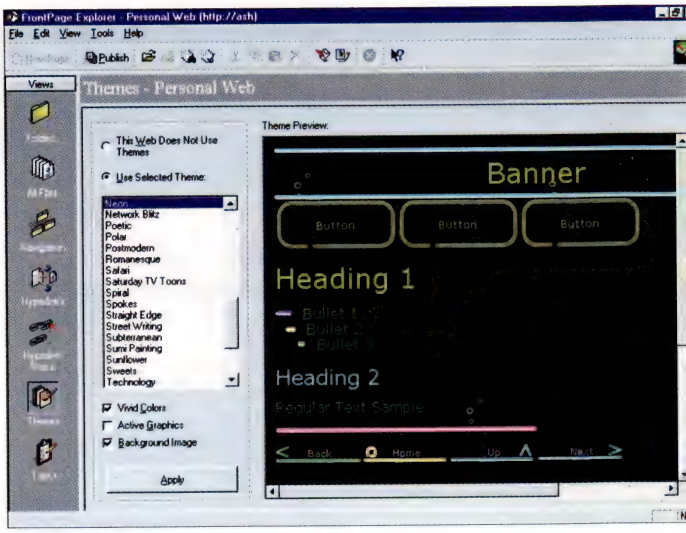


Figure 2. FP98 comes with over 50 theme templates

FP98 is a rich, mature product for the masses ... is certainly far easier to use

Creating a web with FP98

What can you do with FP98? Essentially, you can create a Web site and manage it.

This is much more than creating the HTML pages, which it can handle well—it also includes a Personal Web Server (PWS), so your PC can host those pages. You can also publish your pages on a remote server, a more common scenario for most. Several concepts are involved.

Installation of FP98 creates a "FrontPage web" on your PC, which is a fancy term to describe a set of subdirectories and default files where your HTML pages and Common Gateway Interface (CGI) scripts reside. You get a simple set of starter pages that you can modify with the FrontPage Editor (FE). You can create or modify graphics with Image Composer (IC). GIF Animator enables you to combine still images to create a changing image such as some banner advertisements that you may have seen. Over 50 thematic templates are provided, to get you started. Indeed, the installation process gives you a working, albeit spartan, web site.

When you are ready, you can "publish" your pages on the Internet, which is the process of uploading them to your Internet Service Provider (ISP). Alter-

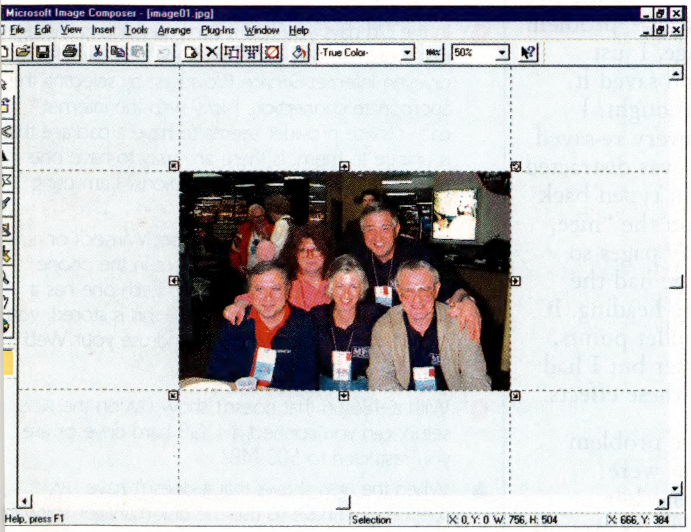


Figure 3. Image Composer struggles with a challenging image

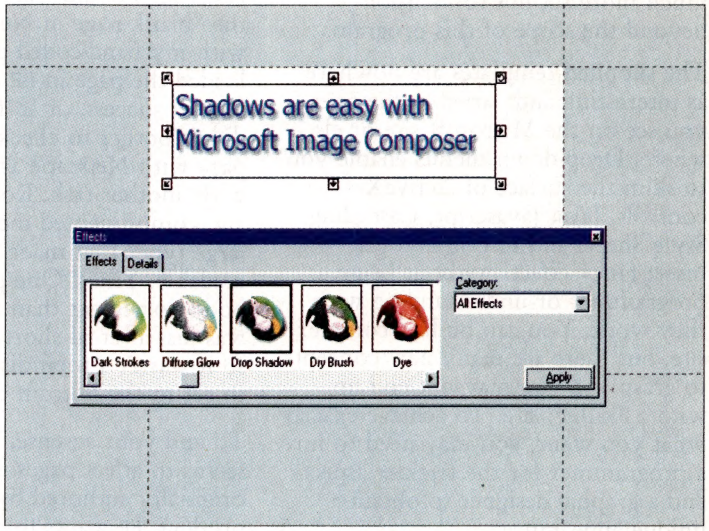
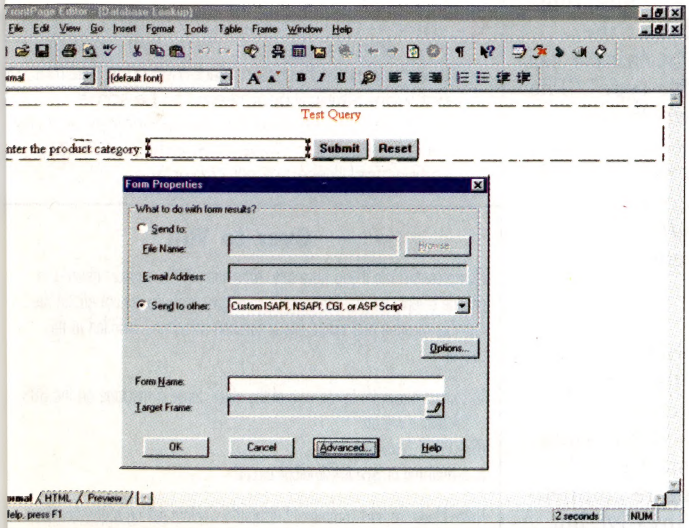


Figure 4. Image Composer makes easy work of special effects



ure 5. You can integrate an Access database with the Web

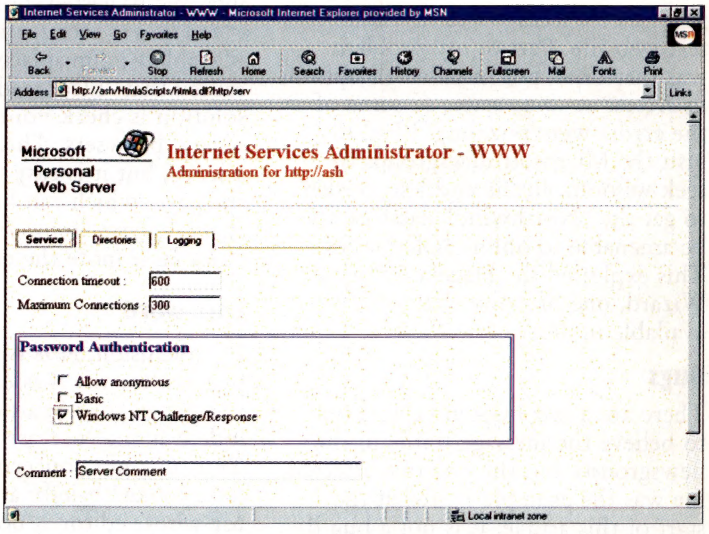


Figure 6. Administration of the Personal Web Server is done with a web browser

natively, you have a live connection to the Internet, so your own PC can host PWS under Windows 95, or you may want a more secure server such as IIS under Windows NT.

The easy stuff

It is easy for a novice to build pages with text, graphics, and links. It seems to work out of the box, at least for me. This is fine getting for your personal pages ready. Certain effects, such as inserting a hit counter are easy to achieve, but don't plan to win any awards for a while.

The difficult stuff

Once you want special effects or database functionality, you have to sit down and learn some new skills or involve a small team of experts. It is difficult enough if your server runs Windows 95 or NT but if you are authoring for a UNIX site and wish to run CGI scripts under Perl, the job is much more so, not to mention beyond the scope of this program.

The supplied templates are nowhere as interesting and varied as the ones you see on the Microsoft site or elsewhere. Drop-down menus enable you to skim the surface of ActiveX controls, Java, Javascript, Cascading Style Sheets and so on. You can insert fancy effects without being a programmer or understanding why they work. You can build a complex site, but there are many new concepts to grasp and you may not end up with a "killer" site. To achieve exactly what you want, you may need to hire a programmer for the trickier aspects and a graphic designer to obtain a unique appearance.

I found it difficult to understand how to connect Access 97 to my humble test web site. Part of my problem was that I had not installed all options in Access at some stage, so some of the errors were puzzling. I had to visit the Microsoft newsgroups to seek wisdom. In the end I succeeded to get the "Northwind" database to be amenable to online SQL queries. This exploited the Database Region Wizard, one of many rich tools available in FE.

Bugs

There are a few bugs in FP98, if one is to believe the message traffic in the newsgroups, but the one that affected me was the example I cited at the start of this article. It is not a bug if everyone sets Internet Explorer as their web browser or if they write their pages from scratch using FP98.

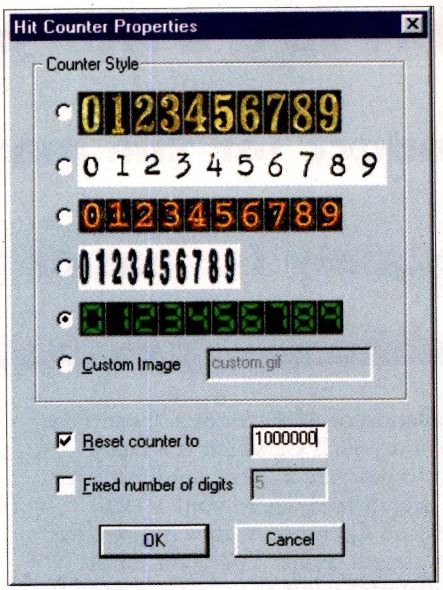


Figure 7. An ActiveX control for a hit counter

After Robin and Carol alerted me to the "blank page in Netscape" problem with my hand-coded page, I just loaded the page in FE and saved it. Instant success, or so I thought. I didn't bother to check every re-saved page with Netscape as I was distracted with another task. Robin typed back and complimented me on the "nice, large type" that made my pages so readable. Yikes! One page had the body text larger than the heading. It was just a set of short bullet points, so it wasn't a total disaster but I had to get to the bottom of these effects.

To end your susense, the problem seems to affect pages that were originally authored by another product. FE wants to add tags around every paragraph and it gets some incorrectly nested. For example, one </td> was terminated after the </table>; a misplaced tag caused that "nice, readable type". The solution is check your work with several browsers. This is not rocket science, but it is easy to miss. I fixed the page, which can be found at *http://easyrsvp.com/neteditor/index.html* (note the extension).

Last word

In conclusion, FP98 is a rich, mature product for the masses. Its editor will re-arrange your Spartan code to indent it and increase the byte count. This may not concern most people. I have looked briefly at a rare competitor whose editor is not invasive but FP98 is certainly far easier to use. □

GROUP SERVICES

Random access

Answers received

From: Andrew Barfoot. If anyone wants drivers, try the following: *http://www.conitech.com/windows/* Here they boast links to over 800 companies and most with (almost) direct links to the support/drivers pages of these companies. Hope this helps.

Questions and answers

Q I have some Apple IIe text files on 5.25-inch floppies and need to convert them to PC format. Is there any simple way of doing this?

A Use a communications package on both, with a null modem cable connecting the IIe and the PC. If the packages have the Zmodem protocol then you can do multiple transfers.

Q In the old days you had a communications package that would let you connect to any number of BBSs or even Internet Service Providers, by selecting the appropriate connection. Now with the internet, each service provider seems to have a package that is unique to them. Is there any way to have one package to get to all the connections? I am using Windows 3.

A If you use a program like Trumpet Winsock or Shiva, these have the ability to put in the phone number for the service provider. Each one has a separate TCP/IP address and once this is stored, you can use the dialler to connect and use your Web browser.

Q With a 486/66 that doesn't show LBA on the BIOS setup, can you connect a 1 GB hard drive or are you restricted to 500 MB?

A When the BIOS shows that it doesn't have LBA support, you have to use the disk manager softwar that comes from Seagate or other supplier. This is usually on the disk that comes with the drive.

Q I have an HP Colorado backup unit and it will not work on the printer port. I thought the unit was faulty and now have a replacement unit but that wi not work either. There seems to be some inconsistency between the old technology and my modern Pentium. I have checked the BIOS EPS settings and these are set correctly.

Over to You

Please contact me if you have any comments on the answers given; can provide a reply for the unanswered questions; or if you cannot attend the monthly meeting and would like a question asked and included in this column.

To contact me: write to me care of the office; leave a message on the BBS or telephone me on
(03) 9857 5567 AH
or e-mail me at *jswale@melbpc.org.au*

Note: Please contact commercial distributors before asking a question here. In all cases mention version numbers.

John Swale

1: Make sure that you have latest version of the software from the HP Web site. You need to play with the settings in the software to get the interrupt parameter that will work. If you want to use the extended tapes that hold 400 MB, they come with new Windows software that solves all those problems.

2: I found that the software would not run with a high screen resolution. When it was set to basic VGA it worked fine. However, others have found that this isn't a problem.

3: On the HP hardware newsgroups there are frequent complaints about the Colorado tape drives, especially the parallel ones. Under Windows 95 there are problems with Windows re-assigning IRQs and you need to make sure they are correct. The IRQ must be set to 7 for the parallel port. Search the newsgroups using *http://www.dejanews.com* for information on problems.

nanswered questions

I am using Windows 95 and Internet Explorer 4. When I try to access the Melb PC Web site and I don't get through, it asks me to disconnect. However it freezes and won't let me do anything, and I have to reboot the PC. Can you suggest any remedies?

I have an old Pentium 60 Soya motherboard that won't reboot when you press Ctrl+Alt+Del or if you exit the CMOS. If you exit from Windows 95 it will only partially reboot. Is there a better solution than using the Reset button? □

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American Power Conversion for the supply of six uninterruptible power supplies for the Group's Communications Centre.

ACA Pacific for the donation of a Diamond Stealth Video card for *PC Update* production.

Computer Rebuilds for the supply of equipment for *PC Update* production and the group's communications centre.

Corel Corporation for copies of CorelDRAW and Corel VENTURA used in the production of *PC Update*.

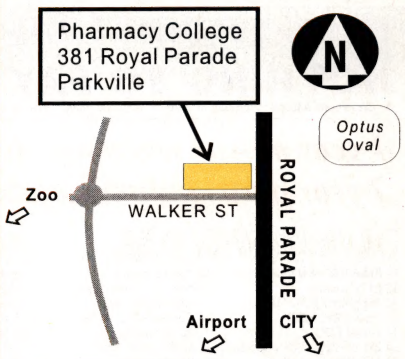
Hewlett-Packard for a LaserJet 4M printer for administration, and a ScanJet scanner and LaserJet 5Si MX used in *PC Update* production.

Michaels Camera & Video for a Kodak DC20 Digital Camera.

Microsoft Australia for many years of contributions and support.

SONY Australia for the supply of equipment for *PC Update* production.

Symantec Australia for many years of contributions and support.



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All members and guests welcome

Pharmacy College
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6.00 pm
First Wednesday each month except January

An average of over 500 members and guests attend our monthly meetings, which provide an excellent forum to introduce and release new products to those who are both users and decision makers. Meetings are arranged around planned themes. Members or presenters who are able to assist or contribute are invited to contact the convener.

Stan Johnstone — Meetings convener and administrator
Phone: (03) 9578 3091 BH
e-mail *stanj@melbpc.org.au*

Next meeting: 4 February

David Shaw — **Netscape**
"Can Netscape stay King of the browsers?"
and
Ian Davis — **Odyssey**
"ISYS, Australia's mighty search engine"

Plus:

- The usual giveaways and raffle
- Random access
- Shareware library sales
- Socialising
- Don't forget the Waffle SIG after the meeting.

PC Update advertisers index

Adgrafix . . . 17
Bayside PC Services . . . 28
Bayside Solutions . . . 43
Box Hill Intitute . . . 21
Computer Rebuilds . . . 23
Cybec . . . 25
Digital Prosperity . . . 7
Dragon Naturally Speaking . . . 22
EasyRSVP . . . 13
Entity Access . . . 11
Free Trader Publications . . . 45
Intronics . . . 26
LED Microprocessors . . . 27
Microsoft . . . 5
Modem Superstore . . . 41
Nucleus Computer Services . . . 9
OfficeNet . . . 25
Pagination Design Services . . . 29
Peter Selig . . . 43
Pollock Computer & Technical Services . . . 26
Solutions by Design . . . 37
Sustance Internet Services . . . 22
Swap Meets— Malvern, Collingwood, Box Hill, Royal Melbourne Showgrounds, Camberwell, Springvale . . . 41
TECS . . . OBC
Ultimate Computing Technology . . . 19
Vision Fix Software and Support . . . 47
Western Melbourne Institute of TAFE . . . 11

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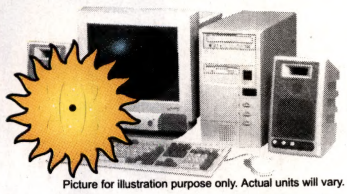

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